

THE  
**Best Entail.**

OR,

Dying Parents Living Hopes  
for their surviving Children,  
grounded upon the Cove-  
nant of Gods Grace, with Be-  
lievers and their Seed.

BEING

A short Discourse upon

2 Sam. 23. 5.

WHEREIN

Is a Collection of several Covenant-Pro-  
mises to support the Faith, and some  
Pleas to direct and quicken the Prayers  
of Gods Covenanted People for their  
surviving Posterity.

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By O. H Minister of the Gospel.

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Psalm 90. 16.

*Let thy Work appear unto thy Servants, and thy Glory  
unto their Children.*

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LONDON,

Printed for Tho. Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three  
Crowns in Cheapside. 1693.

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THE  
EPISTLE  
DEDICATORY.

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*To the Right Honourable  
Philip Lord Wharton.*

*My Lord,*

**T**He concernedness your Lordship hath for the worthy Branches of your Noble Family, is demonstrated to all whom you esteem Friends, by the constant subscription with your own hand [Remember me and my Family in your Prayers,] by which your Lordship at once testifies your natural Affection and true Piety: Your earnest desire of the best good, and the means by which that must come from God, even duon the wings of a believing Prayer.

A 2

Your

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Your Lordships request hath the force of a command ; the obligations laid upon many hundreds of both Ministers and People, extort from us, in point of Gratitude, both many thanksgivings to God, and renewed supplications for your Lordship, that the blessing of *Abraham* may successively continue in your Noble Family, to be blessed, and be a blessing. Oh happy Family ! where the precious Pearl of Covenant-grace Enamels the Gold-ring of worldly honour ! 'Tis true, the Divine Oracles say, Not many Mighty, not many Noble are called. A good Lady added, Blessed be God, that it saith not [not any.] Once at last God will have an Emperour [*a Constantine*] saved. *Augustine* saith wittily, a poor *Lazarus* is laid in rich *Abraham's* bosom. Sacred Writ records a Noble *Theophilus*, and an Elect Lady: And Ecclesiastical History furnisheth us with a large Catalogue of Illustrious Branches of Noble Families, planted in the House of the Lord, and, like fixed Stars of the first Magnitude, have shined bright in their proper Orb, and conveyed great Influence to their Inferiours. In which rank God hath placed your Honour ; whose Morning  
Star

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

Star of early Piety continues still shining bright to a good old Age, and hath cast many resplendent Beams of favour upon Indigent Persons, to spread the favour of Divine Knowledg amongst ignorant souls in the Country; for which the loyns of the Poor, and souls of the Instructed will bless you in this, and the other world. I doubt not, my Lord, but your gracious spirit Eccho's to the dying speech of holy *David*, to whom a succession of Piety in his seed was more Eligible than of Royalty and large Revenues. What can be compared to this one comprehensive promise, [*I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee:*] Yet this is the rich priviledg of Gods Covenanted Servants: Mines of Gold, Mountains of Pearl, can bear no proportion to this one word [My God:] This is light in darkness, life in death, an heaven in the midst of hell. The sense of this is the only Cordial to the fainting Spirits of Gods afflicted Children. Yea, saith one, if but one little drop of Divine Love, should fall into a Damned Soul in Hell, it would sweeten or swallow up those bitter Torments. And next to the priviledg of Gods be-

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

ing our God ; His being our Childrens God claims the Preeminence : For Parents anxious thoughts run out for their Childrens well-doing in this and the other world. If God help us to own him, he will not forsake us or ours. It's true Grace comes not by succession, yet oft in succession. The Line of Covenant-love reacheth to many Generations ; and the more numerous pious Predecessours are, the greater is the shower of Blessings. So a Learned man reads that paternal  
Gen. 49. 26. benediction of *Jacob* to *Joseph*, *The blessings of thy Fathers are strong with the blessings of my Progenitours* : As the more waters run into one Channel, the deeper it grows. Your Lordship then may hope for multiplied, accumulative blessings on your Noble Progeny. If that be found Divinity, which was a Maxime amongst the Jewish Rabbies, That the Divine Glory rests on Noble Stemms ; however beams of love reflect with greatest lustre when descending on honourable Personages. Therefore should we pray, most ardently, for those of highest rank, as in the greatest capacity of doing most good ; and a godly man, or Minister, must not only, with *David*,  
serve

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

*serve his own generation by the will of God* Acts 13.36.  
but with the blessed Apostle Peter, *Endeavour that posterity may be able after* 2 Pet. 1.15.  
*their decease to have Divine Truths al-*  
*ways in remembrance.* This, my Lord,  
hath been the great care of your Ho-  
nour ; and as natural motions are quick-  
est towards the end, so the nearer your  
Lordship approacheth to your center, and  
Haven , the more sedulous and active  
are you to lay a foundation of Religion  
in future Generations ; thereby also lay-  
ing up in store for your self a good foun-  
dation for time to come, so laying hold 2 Tim. 4.19.  
on Eternal Life, for the accomplishing  
of this great End. A poor inconsiderable  
worm casts his Mite into my Lords Trea-  
sury and prostrates himself at your Lord-  
ships Feet, in this Dedication, in testi-  
mony of my real gratitude for your un-  
parallel'd kindness and condescension to  
so ignoble a person . Withal recommend-  
ing this small Treatise to your Lordship,  
to encourage your heart, and strengthen  
your hands in God, under the smarting  
breaches in your Noble Family ; ven-  
turing it into a critical world under  
your Lordships auspicious Name : not  
doubting a pardon of this boldness, and

### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

a candid acceptance following it, with my poor Prayers, that it may obtain its desired success upon the rising Generation, and provoking Parents to improve this blessed Covenant; hoping that when your Lordship hath filled up your days with Grace, and transplanted your Soul into the Cœlestial Paradise; some of your Seed shall rise up in your room as Plants of Renown, to bear your Image and Name, and follow your gracious Example while Sun and Moon endure: Which is the daily Prayer of

*My Lord, Your humble  
and devoted Servant,*

Oliver Heywood.

A  
P R E F A C E,  
O R A N  
E P I S T L E to the READER.

**T**Here is nothing in the World ( I am very confident ) lyes so near the heart of a gracious Christian, next to the Glory of God and his own Souls Eternal happiness, as the Spiritual good of his dear Children: nature binds him to love his own: Christianity regulateth and Spiritualiseth this love: fondness is not true love, but faithfulness: love to their bodies is but brutish without love to their Souls: it's like a doting on the Case, and throwing away the Jewel, the Soul is the man, the unseen part is the best part; where the Soul is lodged, when parted from the Body, there must the Body lodg, in Heaven or Hell: Oh that men understood and well digested this! surely they would not so unweariedly toil and tread to get Estates for their Children, and take no care of their precious Souls, and know not when they Dye whether he that comes after them shall be a Wise man or a Fool: if he be a wise man, a little will serve him, with Gods blessing: if wicked he puts a Sword into the hand of a Fool to do himself and others a greater mischief: Oh how much better is it for their own peace and their Childrens profit to plead the Covenant, to Instruct, Correct, Ad-

Eccl. 21.9



## A Preface

Sabrian ad  
Ecclef. cath.  
lib. 3. p. 441.

monish, Counsel, Comfort and incourage their Children in the ways of God, and use their utmost Endeavour to make them Gods Children: an Ancient thus writes, [ *Disciplinam parentes deus jubet thesaurizare filiis, non pecuniam, perennia præcipit non peritura conferre* ] God commands Parents to hoard up Disciplin, not Money for their Children, things of a perpetual not perishing nature: what a base and sordid thing is it to prefer a Swine to a Son! to provide for a Beast and cast out a Child! and yet most Parents bestow more care of their Cattel than of their Childrens Souls: they give their Children nature, but deny them nurture: Yea they propagate corruption to them, but do not travel over them till Christ be formed in them: they glory in being Fathers of their Flesh, but cry not to the Father of Spirits for the best life in their Childrens dead Souls: they promise at their Baptism, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but know not what that meaneth, and have no heart to learn, that they may teach: Oh what account will these perjured Parents give another day? Remember God will call you to account, what Answer will you give, when he shall Say? where is the Childs Soul, that I committed to thy trust? what care hast thou taken of it? where are thy Tears, Prayers, Groanings, Earnings of Bowels for thine own Bowels? didst thou not know that thy Child had a Soul? that its Soul was polluted with Sin? that it must be born again not only of Water but of the Spirit: or could not be Saved? that though I was to be the Efficient cause, yet thou must be the Instrument to begin and carry on this Work,



to the Reader.

Work, and hast thou struck one stroke in this work by faithfull endeavours? or hast thou earnestly desired me to do that for thy Child that thou couldest not? thou knowest thou hast done neither, and therefore thy Childs Blood shall be required at thy hands: what Apology wilt thou then make for thy self? Dost thou think to come off by Saying, I sent him to School to learn, or to the Minister to be Catechised? this is more than some will do, but is this all? is not paternal care thy personal duty? was not thou charged with thy Childs Soul? may not God justly blast other teachers pains as a punishment of thy negligence? and doth not thy bad Example at home unravel all that others teach them? Wo, Wo be to such wicked wretched Parents!

In the name of God I charge you, as you will not have your Children accuse and curse you in Hell for ever, concern your selves deeply about their Everlasting State, think they can never do well, if they do not well for another World: they will never be dutifull to you, till they be Obedient to God: train them up for God and you consult at once Gods Glory, the good of Church and Commonwealth, your own Comfort, and their Eternal felicity: true Grace qualifys persons for every condition: for he that is really good will be relatively good: a good King and Subject, Father and Child, Master and Servant: Heathens knew this, that the way to form Persons into a due mould of civil Subjection is a literate and virtuous Education: thus the King of Babylon conquering Judah, ordered the Kings seed, and Princes to be trained up in the learning of of the Chaldeans:

Dan. 1. 3, 4

## A Preface

Chaldeans : and our own *Historys* tell us, that when the Romans conquered this Island, Julius Agricola brought Noble mens Sons to Rome, and caused them to be educated in liberal Sciences, whereby they gradually tamed the furious temper of the Britains, so that the Inhabitants here became of gentle spirit, and peaceable Subjects: much more will Christianity and true Piety, bring persons into a regular conformity : it expells Barbarity and produceth Civility, Hospitality, Frugality, and yet a discreet liberality : a divine Benediction is entailed upon Sincere Religion :  
 1 Tim. 4.8. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come : if your Children be Godly they will be fit for any thing, and all things will conduce to their good :

And You, Oh children, suffer a word of Exhortation from one that hath had Experience of childhood, Youth, riper age, and is arrived at old age, and hath been a teacher of others above forty years, and may say to you as Augustus did to his mutinous Army, [ Audite me juvenes, quem juvenem senes Audierunt ] Hear me Young men, whom sometimes Old men have heard and obeyed : God forbid you should be head-strong sons of Belial Yoakless, and so run headlong into the pit of destruction: Be not like the wild asses colt, break not thro' Parents tears, Prayers, counsels and commands, to Hell: Alas ! that any young persons should desperately contradict the persuasions of Ministers, the motions of the Spirit, the checks of their own consciences, the sad warnings of their undone companions and the rods of God on their own backs,  
 and

to the Reader,

and haste through all these to the pit, and never stop till they be swallowed up in that Infernal Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone: you will say what would you have us to do? I answer, Act as Rational Creatures, inure your selves to Solemn consideration: Consider that you are Creatures of an higher rank than Bruits, that you have Immortal never dying Souls, that God made you to Glorify and injoy him: that he hath given you a rule to act by, in order to another state in the other World, that Sin hath depraved your natures, hath deprived you of Gods Image, brought you under his curse: that Christ came to redeem Sinners, that saving Faith doth interest Souls in Christ: that Faith is the gift of God: that in your Baptism you were engaged to forsake the World, Flesh and Devil: Consider your sins since you were baptized, confess them to God: review and renew your Baptismal vow, actually renounce all other claimers, and give up your Selves to the Lord, understandingly, Deliberately, Universally and Perpetually: improve Jesus Christ, as the way, the truth, and the Life: Espouse his interest: joyn with Gods Peop'e: Obey all his commands Attend on him in all his Ordinances: Be sure you be sincere: Exercise every Grace: aim at Perfection: keep a constant watch over your hearts and ways: maintaining a dayly warfare against all Spiritual Enemies: prepare for death: and consider where you must lodg when the King of Terrours lays its cold hand of Arrest upon you: and make your Accounts streight against that great reckoning day: and be sure you put on Christ, and improve him as your Advocate, that he may Answer for you at that day. These

These things I do but touch: for my great design is, the quickening and encouraging of Parents on the behalf of their Posterity: some whereof are left to themselves by the Lord to go astray, which occasioned Mr. Lawrence's excellent Treatise of Parents Groans; nor is it his case only, but many others also, some particular instances are fresh in memory, which have brought some Godly Parents gray hairs with Sorrow to their Graves: some well known Servants of God having never seen any hopeful symptoms of Grace upon some or all their Children in their Life time, and had some sad temptations to question the truth of of God in his Covenant: yet even in the very pangs of Death reacht to and claspt hard this Blessed Word, dying in the hopes of its Efficacy for themselves and theirs, and the subject being recommended to me, was accordingly treated on in a Funeral Discourse, which upon request, I was willing to transcribe, for the encouragement of Poor afflicted Parents, that are bowed down with heart-grief for thir offending Children; I confess the subject is novel and singular, and such as I have not seen any Treatise upon: and having walked in an untrodden path, I hope I may obtain a pardon from God and Man of some Erratick motion, whilst the tendency is Gods Glory and the good of Souls.

I hope none will reject this Treatise, because it seems a limited Subject, as if they were not concerned in it, for as 'tis handled it is extensive to all, Parents, Children; yea such as have no Children, are dealt with in this small Treatise, for their Instruction and Consolation: such as it is I commend to Believing, Praying Parents, following it with my poor Prayers, that all the Children of the Covenant, may be Covenanted Souls, and that Parents may be comforted in the Grace of God in their Posterity, and both may meet in Glory; and if any reap and receive any advantage, I have my reward, and do humbly beg the Incessant Prayers of all that can Pray

For

The poor Servant of Christ

and the Church

O. H.

A

## A General Scheme or view of the Chief Contents of this *Treatise*.

- Chap. 1. *The Context cleared, the Text explained, 10 Doctrines briefly hinted—Page 1.*
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*These Books Written and Published by  
Mr. Oliver Heywood ; are to be sold  
by Tho. Parkhurst, at the Bible and  
Three Crowns in Cheapside.*

**T**HE Sure Mercies of *David* ; being the  
fruits of some Meditations from *Isa.*  
55. 3.

Christ displayed as the choicest gift and  
best Master : from *Joh. 4. 10.* And *Joh. 13. 13.*  
Written by Mr. *Nath. Heywood*, and publish-  
ed by Mr. *Oliver Heywood*.

*Israels* Lamentation after the Lord : Be-  
ing some Meditations upon *1 Sam. 7. 2.*

The Holy Life and Happy Death of Mr.  
*John Angier*.

Closet Prayer : Or a Christians Duty,  
from *Mat. 6. 6.*

Baptismal Bonds renewed : On *Psal. 50. 5.*

Meetness for Heaven upon *Colos. 1. 12.*  
designed for a Funeral Legacy.

Advice to an only Child, or excellent  
Counsel to all Young Persons, containing  
the Sum and Substance of Experimental and  
Practical Divinity. Written by an Emi-  
nent and Judicious Divine for the Private  
use of an only Child now made publick for  
the Benefit of all. Published by Mr. *Oliver  
Heywood*.

# Dying Parent's Living Hopes for their sur- viving Children, &c.

2 Sam. 23. 5.

*Although my house be not so with God, yet  
he hath made with me an Everlasting  
Covenant, ordered in all things and sure :  
for this is all my Salvation, and all my  
Desire, although he make it not to  
grow.*

## CHAP. I.

*The Context cleared, the Text explained,  
Doctrines raised.*

**T**Hese words contain dying *David's*  
living comfort : the Covenant was  
the only Cordial to his fainting Spi-  
rits; when the World lookt black  
about him, here's light ariseth out of obscu-  
rity : just as it was with *Oecolampadius* dying,  
and clapping his hand on his Breast, cried  
[*hic fat lucis*] here's light enough : so *David*  
B and



Job 29. 3.

and a Believing Soul, looking above sees all good in the Covenant; looking within, sees the countervain of it, faith, here, here alone is light: by his light I walk through darkness. This shall be my [*vade mecum*, or] companion through this Pilgrimage of the World, and this only shall be my [*viand* and *viaticum*] support and supply when I pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Farewel empty, filthy World, welcome the immediate presence of my Covenanted God. I am going from a Prison to a Pallace, from sorrow to solace, from Sin to sweet Injoyment of God: and the only foundation of my hopes is this Gospel Covenant: A sad, and sorry dying Miser, ready to breath out his sensual, senseless Soul, got a *Jacobus*-piece of Gold, clapt it to his Breast, saying, Some wiser than others, but I will dye with this Cordial at my Heart: but at last pluckt it away saying, it will not do, alas it will not do; Gold it self is no Cordial, it cannot disarm death nor arm against it, it hath lost its vertue: nothing but Gods Covenant will stand in stead: the dying Child of God is like a Standard-bearer, who when the bat-tel is lost, wraps himself in his Colours and therein is safe, marching triumphantly through Armies of Enemies, untoucht into his Fathers Pallace. Oh happy Soul that in-joys and improves this Covenant!

The Context tells us, that these be the last words of *David*, not absolutely as though he breathed his last, after he had uttered them



them (for there are several expressions and transactions after) but comparatively, they were uttered towards the latter end of *David's* Life. Now the dying words of Pious men are gracious, serious, ponderous: they use not to spend their breath about trifles.

In the Context, we have 1. The Porch, or Introduction. 2. The Temple, and excellency of the Gospel Covenant.

In the Porch or Introduction we have these two things. 1. The Penman, instrument, or Amanuensis, who spoke these words, *David*. 2. The Authour who dictated them.

1. The Penman, or Instrument, *David*, is described these four ways.

- 1. By his natural descent, the Son of *Jesse*.
- 2. By his Royal Dignity, raised up on high.
- 3. By his Divine Unction anointed of God.
- 4. By his Employment, Exercise, sweet-Psalmist of *Israel*: whose breath is sweet to this Day.

2. The Authour that dictated to *David*.

- 1. The Holy Ghost, Spirit spake by me.
- 2. God the Father, the God of *Israel*.
- 3. Jesus Christ the Mediator of the Covenant, called here the Rock of *Israel*, as he is called, 1 Cor. 10. 4.

2. In the Temple or the Matter *David* speaks are also two things considerable.

- 1. The nature of *David's* Regiment.
- 2. The Excellency of the Covenant.

For the former which unfolds to us, the nature and properties of *David's* Kingdom,

as the type, and of Christs as the Antitype, in four particulars.

1. The holiness of it, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; a brave character.

2. The happiness of it, he shall be as the light of the morning, when the Sun riseth, a morning without clouds.

3. The fruitness of it, as the tender grass springing out of the Earth, by clear shining after Rain.

4. Here's an uncomfortable exception with reference to *David's* Family and Kingdom, in these words [*Although my house be not so with God.*]

2. Here's an Excellent description of the nature, properties, and suitableness of the Gospel-Covenant, in these four particulars.

Viz. { 1. The dureableness of it, Everlasting.  
2. The orderliness of it, Ordered.  
3. The sureness, certainty of it.  
4. The suitableness to *David*, as to his.

{ 1. Present desires in this World.  
2. Eternal Salvation hereafter.

You see the Text is a full store house, a rich treasury, a blessed Magazine, whence we may fetch both meat and medicine, food and physick, work and reward, all things that concern grace and glory.

1. The Text then presents to us *David's* case, and 2. Cure. 1. His Case is presented negatively, [*Although my house be not so with God.*] 2. His Cure positively, which is [the

[the Covenant,] that's a Salve for all Sores, a Remedy for all Maladies, a Supply for all Wants.

I am not ignorant that some carry the sense thus, *Although my house be not so with God*, i. e. my house is not such an unstable, inconstant thing, to alter and change as the Weather, from a glorious Sun-shine morning, to a dark cloudy, gloomy evening, so it may prove, a stormy, rainy day; no, no, my House and Family is fixed, settled, splendid, and compleat, if not in my outward affairs at present, yet in the Messiah to come out of my Loynes in the fulness of time: his Kingdom will appear, and shine most gloriously, and break in pieces all other Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever; so you read, *Dan. 2. 44.*

But (though that be a great truth) I am apt to incline to those Interpreters, that take this as a concession, concerning the defects and imperfection of Piety and Tranquillity in *David's* Family, *q. d.* I must needs confess, that neither I nor my Children have lived so exactly, or ruled so uprightly in the fear of God as we ought; we have had our faults and folly, which have clouded our Consciences and Reputation, and therefore have not enjoyed such uninterrupted prosperity as we might, had we walked more closely and exactly, and therefore sad Clouds and Storms have darkened and disturbed our Heaven, yea oft benighted our state, domestical political, ecclesiastical, as well as personal, my

Children have not been like tender Grass, springing up to maturity, but some of them cut off in the prime of their days ; I have been banisht from my Throne, and family, not suffered to build God an House, nor abide in his Sanctuary, my wounded Spirit hath sigh'd out many heavy groans, God hath oft with-drawn his Grace, hid his Face, and left my Soul on the brink of hellish despair ; yet for all this I can in my lowest ebbs cast my Eye upon the Gospel-Covenant, and fetch relief from that in my lowest state, inward or outward.

Many Doctrines may be drawn out of this large, and full Text.

Doctrine 1. *That it's a singular mercy to be betruſted with a Family.*

This is implied, and owned by *David*, in *1 Chron. 17. 16, 25.* God ſetteth the ſolitary in Families, *Pſal. 68. 6.*

Doct. 2. *House-holders muſt make inſpection into their Families.*

So doth *David* here, and *Pſal. 101. 2, 3.* he had a large Family, State-affairs on his hands, yet prays with his Family, *2 Sam. 6. 20.* puts it not off to Stewards or Chaplains. See *Prov. 27. 23.*

Doct. 3. *A Religious Family is to be with God.*

Although my Houſe be not ſo with God, he earneſtly deſires all the members of his Family might be with God, laments the contrary, for the Lord is with them that are with him, *2 Chron. 15. 2.*

Doct.

Doct. 4. *The best Families have their defects and imperfections.*

David's Family (for all his care) may be far from the rule, not only as to individual members, but as to the complex body of a Family; there were disorders even in Christ's own Family.

Doct. 5. *Family-faults bring family plagues, family-defects produce family-afflictions.*

God will not spare sinning families, though dear to him, nay they shall smart soonest and forest, Amos 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the Earth, therefore I will punish you.*

Doct. 6. *Family-miscarriages do greatly trouble gracious house-holders.*

He speaks of it, with sad resentment. Oh what bitterness is it to a godly Father, Master, to find disorders in such as are under his charge!

Doct. 7. *The Covenant of Grace is extensive and comprehensive.*

The godly have much comfort and content in it, with reference not only to themselves, but their houses and families.

Doct. 8. *The Covenant of Grace is Everlasting.*

It is from all Eternity in the Covenant of Redemption, betwixt Father and Son, Tit. 1. 1, 2. and endures for ever, Psal. 111. 9.

Doct. 9. *There is a comely and admirable order in the Gospel-Covenant.*

An order of persons, in the Fathers Election, Sons Redemption, Holy Ghosts Application,

cation, believers reception: An order of things supream, subordinate causes, means, instruments, promises, priviledges, principles, and practices; all keep their places, they do not interfere or thwart each other.

Doct. 10. *The Gospel-covenant is sure and stable.*

Things are not left at uncertainties, nor depend on the mutable Will of Man, as of old it was with *Adam*: but they are the sure Mercies of *David*, *Isa.* 55. 2. and 54. 9, 10.

Doct. 11. *There's that in the Covenant that answers a Christian's desires.*

As the Christians desire is mainly carried to it; so there is that in it which answers and satisfies those desires: desires are vast and immense, but the contents of the Covenant run parallel, and are every way adequate to just desires.

Doct. 12. *A Christians Salvation is wrapt up in the Gospel covenant.*

Upon this may a Child of God venture his Soul. Eternal Life is contained and comprehended in it.

I wave all these, and shall consider the Text in a twofold notion, or relation.

- { 1. In a domestical sense.
- { 2. In a personal respect.

The former refers to *David's* House, the latter to his Heart and Soul: this blessed Covenant was *David's* chief relief, in both these cases: from the former observe,

That notwithstanding the sins and sufferings in a godly mans family which occasion much

much grief to his Spirit, yet he is supported and satisfied with Gods gracious Gospel-covenant.

From the latter acceptation observe this.

Doct. *That Covenant Relation is the foundation of a dying Christians safety, satisfaction, and salvation.*

It is the former Doctrine I shall say something to at present.

## CHAP. II.

*The Doctrine cleared from the Text, some things premised.*

THE principal point I propose from the Text concerns *David's* family, for 1. He mentions his house in the beginning of the Text. 2. The latter end of the verse refers to his house, [Although he make it (*i. e.* my house) not to grow] *i. e.* to increase in number, power, honour.

The former part of the verse is variously rendred, *לֹא בֵּיתִי עִם אֱלֹהִים* *nec tanta est domus mea apud Deum.* Nor is my house so great, or of so much worth with God. Alas what is my house at best, my pedigree is mean and base. *David* disdains not to reflect on his despicable original, though advanced to the culminating point of civil and spiritual promotion, as a King and Prophet: he magnifieth God, and villifieth, yea nullifieth himself, 2 Sam. 7. 18. *Who am I, O Lord*



Chaldee.

Lord God, and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto? others thus, *plus est quam hac domus mea ante Deum*, Jon. i. e. there is more in the Covenant than this my house before God. All the Families in the World amount not to so much as one Messias, he, he only is the noble flourishing branch springing out of my Family, that's worth us all, who conveys life and sap to us all, this is the Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a branch growing out of its Roots, and they shall hang on him all the glory of his Fathers house: my whole family would fall to ruine but for him, on whose behalf it must be upheld, that he may be born of it: yea who only upholds it.

Isa. 11. 1.

Isa. 22. 24.

Others thus, [*quamvis not sit ita*] i. e. Although, my Family, and Kingdom be not so holy, as to perform the conditions of the Covenant so exactly as God requireth, we are guilty in many respects before God, and he hath whipt us sore, yet Gods Covenant is the ground of my hope for my Family, and I doubt not but my Lord will make it good.

And what David saith of his Family, any Child of God may say of his, except in the peculiar case of the Messiah springing out of his loins. Thence we may safely draw this

Doct. *That notwithstanding the sins and sufferings in a godly mans Family, which occasion much grief to his Spirit, yet he is supported and satisfied with Gods gracious Gospel covenant.*

In handling this point I shall

i. Pre-



1. Premise some things fit to be known.
2. Give the proof of the point.
3. Answer a main objection.
4. Make a short Application.

The things to be premised are four,

1. What may befall a Godly mans family.
2. Why are these a grief to his Spirit.
3. What is the Covenant that supports

him.

4. What is in the Covenant to bear him up.
- A word of all these briefly.

1. What may fall out in a godly mans family that may occasion his grief?

*Answ.* I shall reduce these to two heads.

1. Corruptions breaking out.
2. Afflictions breaking in on his house, sin and suffering, and indeed suffering is the proper fruit of sinning.

1. Corruption may break out in godly families: I shall not need to instance in *Adams*, *Noahs*, *Abrahams*, *Isaacs*, yea even in *Jacobs*, *Aarons*, *Samuels*, &c. I shall keep to *David's*, Alas, corruption brake out sadly. 1. In himself. 2. In his Children. 1. *David* was guilty of, 1. Sins of Ommission, possibly not instructing, restraining, or not punishing *Ammon*, *Absolom*, and not crossing *Adonijah*, 1 *Kin.* 2 *Ria.* 13. 21. 1. 6. *David* was too indulgent for which he smarted. Yea, 2. He was guilty of foul sins of commission: as Adultery, and Murder of his faithful Servant *Uriah*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 4, 27. rashness towards *Mephibosheth*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 29. sometimes lying, changing his behaviour, &c. 2. His Children also were deeply guilty, *Am-*

*mons*

2 Sam. 13. *mons* Incest, *Abfolom's* Rebellion, and *Adonijah's* Ambition. Alas that there should be found ſuch groſs abominations in godly *David's* Family! yet this was not his caſe only, it's ſaid of *Samuel*, that his ſons walked not in his ways, but turned aſide after lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment, 1 Sam. 8. 3.

2. And what a flood gate of troubles did theſe ſins open, which gushed in upon him, Pfal. 42. 7. deep called to deep, all Gods Waves and Billows went over him, Remember *David* and all his Afflictions, ſaith he, how numerous, how ponderous! ſome of his deſireable Children dying in the height of their career, by the eminent hand of juſtice one died in infancy to puniſh his iniquity: beſides foreign Enemies, he had a doomy morning, noon, evening, what bloody Wars with *Saul*, and his houſe, with Philiftines, Ammonites! what ſad Tragedies, Inſurrections, Commotions, Confuſions, threatning a total Diſſipation and extirpation, ſo that *David* might call ſome Child *Beriab*, as *Ephraim* did becauſe it went evil with his houſe. 1 Chron. 7. 21, 22, 23. and ſo it hath done with many a good mans houſe.

2. Why are theſe breakings out of ſin, and breakings in of ſufferings in their Families, ſuch a grief to godly houſeholders?

*An.* For the firſt, it muſt needs trouble them.

1. Becauſe by ſin God is greatly diſpleaſed, his name much diſhonoured, Religion-diſcredited, the hearts of the Godly ſadened, the wicked

wicked scandalized, hardened ; Motes in Professors are beams, Mountains in the eyes of Prophane ; what will they say ? they are no better than we, what are they but a pack of hypocrites, to what purpose is all their whining and praying ? Our Children carry as civilly as theirs, where's the Covenant they boast of ? Hence *David*, Psal. 42. 3. *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God ?*

2. They are greatly afflicted with the sins of Children, because the beloved of their Souls are endanger'd, they are pieces of themselves, as their own Souls, how can I endure to see my own flesh scorched, and tormented in Hell-flames ? Oh ! that Child that came out of my Loins, my Bowels, to be separated from God, a companion with Devils, a Fire-brand in Hell, the mention of it sinks my Spirits ? Is all my labour lost ? their Souls lost ? oh who can endure to think of it ? no wonder if that be the first of *Solomon's Proverbs*, *ch. 1. A wise Son maketh a glad Father ; but a foolish Son is the heaviness of his Mother.* Yea, he frequently repeats it : other afflictions lye on the back, this goes to the heart, see *Rom. 9 1, 2, 3.*

3. Consciousness in Parents of their own guilt, makes Childrens Miscarriages, more uneasie and afflictive. O I read my sin in my Childs folly, alas, omission of due instruction, admonition, correction hath brought my Child to this, I may thank my self, I have

Prov. 15.  
28.

17. 25

have taught the young ones by my bad Example, I have not watcht over them, pray'd for them, been so jealous of them, to offer Sacrifice for them continually, as I find *Job* did, *chap. 1. 5, 3, 25.* who can tell, but if I had been faithful, I might have prevented all this ? Oh, my Childs sin brings my youthful vanities to my remembrance, thus I dealt with my Father, to this pitch I arrived. God punisheth my sin with my Childs : I am verily guilty, this cuts deep, *Jer. 4. 18.*

4. The affliction is heavier because it doth in some sort weaken Parents confidence in the Covenant, and endanger their faith in the Promise. Godly Parents are ready to say when a Child is born and baptized as *Samuel* of *Eliab*, surely the Lords anointed is before him, this is a lovely child, I hope this may honour God in his day, but the child grows up, and degenerates, answers, not expectations, but grows debaucht, and hopeless ; old in sin, though young in years, and now the Godly Parents hopes are dashed and daunted, he is put to a stand, and knows not what to think or say, but concludes sadly, with the two disciples in another case, we trusted that it had been he (this Child) that should have been an honour to God, a comfort to me, and a good instrument in the Church. but oh how am I disappointed ! he proves the greatest affliction I have oh what's become of the Covenant ? have I not some reason to question either Gods faithfulness or mine own interest ? This was the temptati-

on of holy *David*, with whom the Covenant was made expressly and immediately, *Psal.* 89. 20. yea God gives him all the assurances imaginable his word, his oath, *ver.* 34, 35. yet *ver.* 49. he saith Lord, where are thy former loving kindnesse, which thou sworest unto *David* in thy truth? A sad expostulation, as if God kept not touch with *David*, why what's the matter? the reason was, because Providences run counter to Promises: crosses seemed to make void Gods Covenant, *ver.* 38. to 46. but thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed, &c. Alas, *David*, where's thy Faith? But so it is that sense prevails in the best Saints above Faith at some seasons: but most of all in this case, when the Children of the Covenant, cross the Ends of the Covenant? and no doubt this becomes a great grief of heart to a godly Soul; when he is thus sadly non-plust, till the light of the Covenant rightly understood unriddle this mystery, the poor Christian is in great perplexity: *David* had a promise by *Samuel* that he should be King, yet saith in his heart, *I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.* *1 Sam. 27. 1.* Why so? why, his present danger seemed to supersede the performance of that promise, *Psal.* 116. and, though he said in his haste all men are liars, yet when he came to himself, certainly he would fret and vex himself, that he should so wrong himself, and *Samuel* yea and cast such an unworthy reflection upon God himself, as though he were unfaithful to his promise:

mise: thus will the Godly Soul do at last, but at present he is upon a strange rack, tortured betwixt hope and fear.

### CH A P. III.

*What this Covenant is, and what is in it to support the Christian.*

**I**T would be superfluous to say much of the nature of a Covenant, yet take this short description of it.

A Covenant is a voluntary mutual compact between two parties, containing benefits to be enjoyed, and duties to be performed.

1. It's a compact between two parties, for though a single person may make a promise, yet a covenant is betwixt two or more, and of parties formerly at distance; this is the case betwixt God and Man, so *Gen. 26. 28.*

2. It's a mutual reciprocal compact, both parties must be engaged, therefore it's called the Bond of the Covenant, *Ezek. 20. 87.* because though they were free before yet now they are become bond.

3. It's a voluntary compact, both parties were free before they were obliged by covenant, covenanting is an Elective act, God is a free Agent: nothing but pure love induced him to covenant with Man, *Deut. 7. 7, 8.* and though man was not absolutely free, being Gods Creature, and so bound to his Creator, yet his actual entring into Covenant

is



is a voluntary act, *Psal. 110. 3. Thy People shall be willing [or Volunteers] in the day of thy Power.*

4. Betwixt Covenanters there is mutual obligation to conferring of benefits, and performing of duties [called the *habenda* and the *agenda*] things to be conferred by God, and received by man, and duties on mans part if he expect any benefits from God, *Isa. 1. 19.* If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the Land.

Yet in the Covenant of Grace betwixt God and Man, there are two things peculiar.

1. That there is an interposing Mediator, our blessed Jesus, the days-man that lays his hand upon both: now saith the Apostle, a mediator, is not of one, but God is one, *Gal. 3. 20. i. e.* his business is to reconcile parties not only distinct, but different. *Job 9. 55.*

2. This Mediator is also surety or sponsor, to be a susceptor or undertaker for both parties, *i. e.* to perform what is necessary, both what concerns conferring of benefits on Gods part, not formally, and performing conditions on mans part, as though Christ believes and repents for us, to save us a labour of repenting or believing, but meritoriously, purchasing these Graces for us, and efficiently working them in us, thus Jesus is made a surety of a better Testament, *Heb. 7. 22* on Gods part, he brings in everlasting righteousness, and makes God friends with us, and all his attributes amicable to us, employ'd for us: on our part working gracious dispositions and actings, which are the conditions

of the Covenant, so the whole lyes upon  
 Col. 3. 11. Christ : and *he is all in all* : he is responsible  
 for God and Man, being only able and capa-  
 ble, as God and Man, to fulfill necessary  
 terms on both parts: thus God promiseth  
 what he requires, and gives what he promi-  
 seth, Jer. 3. 19. *But I said, how shall I put  
 thee among the Children, and give thee a plea-  
 sant land, a goodly heritage of the Host of Na-  
 tions? And I said thou shalt call me my Father,  
 and shalt not turn away from me. [Thou shalt]*  
 there's Gods undertaking, to give filial dis-  
 position and perseverance : Oh infinite con-  
 trivance of Divine Wisdom and Free grace !

Mr. Baxter's  
 Directory.

An Eminent Divine observes, that 1.  
 The Gospel relating matters of fact, is an  
 history. 2. Declaring terms on which God  
 will be served, is a law of Grace. 3. Dis-  
 covering promises of Life conditionally, it  
 is Gods Covenant. 4. As accepted by Man,  
 it is a mutual Covenant betwixt God and  
 Man: this Law and Covenant of Grace,  
 which was purchased by Christs Death, is  
 that legacy he left to the World, dispensed  
 by his Ambassadors, and effectually con-  
 veyed to the Legatees, or Heirs of Promise,  
 by his grand Executor the Holy Ghost. This  
 then is the great security of mans Salvation,  
 Phil. 2. 13. *That God worketh in us, both to will and to do,*  
 1 Pet. 1. 5. *that we are kept by the mighty power of God*  
*through Faith unto Salvation.* This is the ex-  
 cellency of the Gospel dispensation of the  
 New-Covenant, the Old-Covenant laid all  
 the stress on the shoulders of mutable man,  
 and



and therefore it is judged, that the Covenant of God made with *Adam* in innocency, was peculiar to him in that estate and went no farther, is not at all continued in any force since the Fall, for if *there had been a law given, which could have given life, then righteousness had been by the Law*, Gal. 3. 21. but it is by the Gospel-Covenant that we are justified and saved.

*Quest.* What's all this to the purpose? All this seems to be personal not relating to posterity, but you told us of grounds of hope for Children from the Covenant: how come Children concerned in this Covenant?

This leads me to the

4th Thing premised, *viz.* What is there in the Gospel-covenant, that is ground of support to Parents on the behalf of their Children?

I answer, in general, Parents and Children are legally one party, and in civil contracts are usually involved in the same bottom, so in the first Covenant *Adam* being a publick person, represented all his Posterity, for judgment was by one to condemnation, yea upon all men: we smart for *Adam's* sin. And in the Old Testament-dispensation of the Covenant, Gen. 17. 7. *I will establish my Covenant between Me and Thee, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations.* And afterwards in *Moses* days, when God renewed the Covenant, he saith Deut. 29. 14, 15. *Neither with you only do I make this Covenant, and this Oath, with him that standeth here with us this*

Rom. 5. 16,  
18.

before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day, i. e. With their Posterity, and so [the People did understand it, Deut. 5. 3. *The Lord made not (i. e. only) this Covenant with our Fathers, but with us, even us who are all of us here alive this day.* And in the New Testament, the Apostle saith, Act. 2. 39. *For the promise is unto you, and to your Children: this is a [fadtus ad successores transiens] a Covenant that passeth to successors.* Bargains, Leases, Legacies may pass to Children, yea Children may suffer for their Parents faults, Traitors Sons lose their Fathers inheritance.

Now we must look upon Children under a double capacity. 1. Children of Heathens, or Jews; Turks, or Infidels. 2. Children of Christian Parents: concerning the former we have little to say. 'Tis the latter we treat of, and of these also, 1. Some are only by an external profession in Covenant. 2. Others are sincerely, savingly in Covenant with God: we can say little concerning the former, we insist chiefly on the latter: and of both or all these, 1. Some Children dye in Infancy, 2. Others live to years of maturity: I shall hint a word or two of the former, though it be the latter that I principally design.

1. For Children dying in Infancy, if we had any Scripture-discovery concerning the Election of all Infants, or that Christ had expiated the guilt of such Infants, or that effectual saving Grace doth always attend the Ordinance

Ordinance of Baptism, though they be brought under it (which yet many are not) the question were quickly determined, but what God doth with the Souls of such Infants, we have not sufficient means to understand, and therefore leave them to Gods good pleasure. But concerning the Seed of those that truly fear God, of one or both the Parents, we have ground of hope for their Salvation: for

1. They are Holy, 1 Cor. 7. 14. and though it be federally or relatively holy yet may be really, and so be saved.

2. Our Saviour saith, of such is *the Kingdom* Mark 10. of God, or of Heaven, Mat. 19. 14. not only such<sup>14.</sup> as have the disposition of Children, but Infants themselves, may be Church-members here, and glorify'd hereafter.

3. Children of Godly Parents are in Covenant with God, *Now to Abraham and to his Seed were the promises made*, Gal. 3. 16. natural as well as spiritual: it's true there was a Covenant of peculiarity to give his Seed the land of Canaan, and it's as true, the text speaks not of Seeds but *one Seed*, that is Christ, but the Scripture affirms, *that in his Seed*, Christ, yea *in thee*, saith God, *shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed*, Gen. 12. 3. for so doth the Apostle interpret, and apply it, Act. 3. 25. *Ye are the Children of the Prophets and of the Covenant, which God hath made with our Fathers.*

4. David had good hopes that his Child was gone to Heaven, 2 Sam. 12. 25. *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.* Obs.

1. He doth not only mean into the state of the dead, where the child is, but into Heaven where *I shall find him*, for his Carcass was but part of him, and the least part. 2. This hope he had of him, though the Child was begot in Adultery. 3. Though the Child was struck with death, as a punishment of *David's sin*. 4. Though the Child had not yet circumcision the Seal of the Covenant, for *he died on the seventh day*, ver. 18. and we know that Circumcision was not to be till the eighth day. So that it seems the stress is not laid on the Seal, but on the Covenant: so that we see grounds of hope for the Eternal Salvation of the Infants, of believing Parents. But how and whence this comes to pass, that such Infants become capable of Eternal Salvation, that's a great Question.

Gen. 17.  
12.

*Luther* thinks that Infants have actual Faith, from Mat. 18. 6. *Whofo shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me.* So reason is in Infants [ *tanquam in principio & Radice* ] in its principle, root, habit, virtually though not yet actually produced.

2. Others say they are saved by some peculiar, unknown, unspeakable way without Faith, but the text saith, Mark 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned:* how far this extends with reference to Infants I know not.

3. Others say that Parents Faith is also Childrens, according to the Tenour of the Cove-

Covenant; [*I will be thy God and the God of thy Seed*] thus Children have faith after a sort. So the text saith, Rom. 11. 16. *If the Root be holy, the Branches are also holy.* So in humane Laws the Father and the Heir are but one Person : of this opinion is Mr. *Perkin's*, and produceth the testimony of the Antients, as St. *Augustin* and *Bernard*, saying it is meet, and for the honour of God, that to whom age denies their own Faith, Grace should grant to them, a benefit by the Faith of another. *Perk vol. 1. fol. 486.* where he answers *Bellarmino's* objection, " That by this means " Children shall be born Believers, and so " be conceived and born without original " sin.

*Ans.* " Believing Parents sustain two " persons, one whereby they are men, and " thus they bring forth Children, having " Mans Nature with all the corruptions of " nature : the other as they are holy men, " and Believers, and thus they bring forth " Infants, that are not so much their Children, as the Children of God ; and Infants " are Gods Children, not by vertue of their " birth, but by means of Parents Faith, " which intitles them to all the blessings of " the Covenant. Thus he.

But this is not the subject of our present design, and consideration.

## CHAP. IV.

*What grounds of hope Parents have from the Covenant for their Adult, and surviving Children.*

**T**HE second head in the prosecuting of this Doctrine is the proof of the point, That notwithstanding the sins and sufferings, breaking forth in a godly man's Family, or breaking in upon it, which occasion much grief to his Spirit, yet he is, and hath reason to be supported and satisfied from Gods gracious Gospel-covenant.

I am very sensible I have undertaken a difficult province, and walk in an untrodden path; But this I may confidently affirm, that whatever befalls a covenanted Soul, he may fetch all good out of this blessed treasury: for 1. Either his Children shall be laid hold on by converting Grace; or 2. They shall not: if they be, oh what cause will he have to magnifie Covenant-love, on their behalf? if not, still he will exceedingly adore Covenant-grace, on his own behalf, that hath made him to differ, and in the worst case will find something in the Covenant for supporting his Spirit, and sanctifying his bitter cup of Affliction, in the death of Children. As to this latter, I shall say nothing, but refer you to a small Treatise of Mr. John Flavel's, called the Balm of the Covenant applied to the bleeding wounds of afflicted Saints, from this text. But

But my present business is to gather up such gracious promises, as a Nosegay, or Posie, out of the Garden of Scripture, as may refresh the drooping hearts of Gods poor Children, forrowing for the miscarriages of their Children, that they may turn them into Prayer, or use them as a Cordial to support them, till the Lord shine upon the Souls of their beloved off-spring.

In general observe that as the Covenant of Grace is a blessed constellation. So every promise is an orient refulgent Star, to give both light and influence to the weary Traveller, in this dark and dismal dispensation ; wherein he is appalled through sad fears that his Child shall be a cast-away.

The Question is, what grounds of hope from Scripture have godly Parents, for their Children that are grown, or growing up and likely to survive or out-live them ? The resolving of this is of exceeding great importance, and having searched the Sacred Records, I do find twelve sorts of Promises that may encourage Parents Hearts.

I. The first and chief is God himself, Gen. 17. 7. *For I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their Generations for an Everlasting Covenant : to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.* This extends both to Abraham's natural Seed, and afterwards to his Spiritual Seed, all Gentile-believers, Rom. 4. 12, 18. Oh what a privilege is this ! whatever God is, hath, or can be or do, is for believers, of all that's communicable,



municable, divine power, wisdom, goodness, mercy, holiness, justice is the portion of Believers, and their Seed, whatever they can ask or expect in a God, shall be in due season, laid out, in them, and for them: this one word is the substance and confluence of all good, spiritual, temporal, eternal, [*Deus meus & omnia*] My God, is the most extensive and comprehensive word in the World: what can a man desire more, and no less will give a gracious Soul content for himself and his Seed: no less is in the Covenant, Jer. 31. 33. *Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord.* Psal. 33. 12. God (in some sense) may be the God of Nations, Families, as well as Persons: and if some boast of Pedigree, Wealth, Honour, numerous Posterity, Worldly Prosperity, yet let *David* reckon up the Epitome, the *summa totalis* of mans felicity, he will thus conclude, *happy is that People whose God is the Lord*, Psal. 144. 12, 15. Happy Parents that bequeath such a Legacy to their Posterity, though they leave them in Poverty!

2. Next to that, and a mean to injoy God is Jesus Christ the Mediator of the Covenant, Isa. 42. 6. *I will give thee for a Covenant of the People, for a light of the Gentiles*: it's true God vouchsafed to the Jewish Nation this privilege, that of them as concerning the Flesh Christ came, but they cannot monopolize this glorious gift, for now in Christ Jesus we who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, and poor Gentiles laying hold on the Covenant, are become free Denizens of

Rom. 9. 5.

Eph. 2. 13.

of all Jewish priviledges that are essential to Salvation, for we are all one in Christ Jesus Gal. 3. 28. and promises are to us that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, Act. 2. 39. even Christ himself, in whom all the promises of God are yea, and in him, Amen. Nor <sup>2 Cor. 1.</sup> can any man have an interest in any one promise for himself or seed, without an interest in Christ: there never was or will be any Covenant betwixt God and Man since the fall, but through Christ: he then that hath Christ, hath something to plead for his Children more than another hath: he only is all and in all for our selves and ours; And they shall hang on him all the glory of his Fathers House, the off-spring and the issue. all vessels of small quantity, Isa. 22. 24. All believers are Gods family, and by Faith in Prayer they may freely hang upon him off-spring, i. e. Children, Grand-children, the smallest and least of the Vessels that are in their house he will not refuse them, but lovingly entertain them; himself will take Infants into his Arms, as himself being an Infant, was taken into old Simeons Arms, and both old and young are blessed by him. Oh happy Parents that lay surviving seed in so warm a bosom! they cannot miscarry that have Christ for their Guardian.

3. Another Legacy that Parents may leave their Children is the third person of the blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost, Isa. 44. 3, 4. For I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty. I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my blessing upon thine off-spring, and they shall spring up

Joh. 14. 16,  
26.  
16. 8, 13

up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses: There's no interest in God or Christ but by the operation of the Spirit: the Holy Ghost proceeding from Father and Son, *teacheth* believers *all things*, convinceth of Sin, reneweth the will, begetteth faith, uniteth the Soul to God, filleth the empty vessel with divine gifts, graces, influences, comforts; all the good things of Heaven are conveyed into the Soul by our Lords substitute. the Spirit assisteth, quickneth, enlargeth, supporteth and satisfieth; yea saith the Christian, I have had much experience of the Spirits help in my own Soul, but what reason have I to hope for the like to my Children? Look on the text again, *I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed*: it shall not come on them by drops, but be poured on them abundantly: they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, see the full promise in *Joel 2. 28* accomplished, *Act. 2. 17, 18. I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your Sons and Daughters shall Prophecy.* It's true there's something in that Promise Arbitrary and extraordinary, suited to that dispensation, but something there is also usual, permanent and essentially necessary to true Christianity: which God makes good to believers and their seed in all ages. Oh happy Children! that have *the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion and communications of the Holy Ghost*, 2 Cor. 13. 14.

4. Children of Believers are rightful heirs of all Gospel-priviledges: I may in a sound sense

sense say of them as *Paul* of the Jewish Church, *Rom. 9. 4.* who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the Adoption, and the glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the Promises: there are two sorts of priviledges.

1. External as the Ordinances, they being born within the Pale of the Visible Church, have the Prayers of Gods People for them.

As the Children of *Abraham* had the Seal of Circumcision, at eight days old, so Children of Believers are Baptized, being Disciples of Christ, *Rom. 4. 11.*

and so have Gods Sheep-mark set upon them *Mat. 28. 19.*

betimes, and are taken into his peculiar protection, and growing up, and owning their Baptismal Covenant, they enjoy, 2. Those Essential Priviledges that accompany Salvation, as Reconciliation, Adoption, Justification, and are in a fair way to Eternal Salvation, for they lye in the Road of Free-grace, under the droppings of the Sanctuary, where the Spirit is wont to breathe the breath of Spiritual Life: if any be proper heirs of Gods special care, and Ordinances, surely it's the Children of Gods People, *Psal. 69. 35, 36.* For God will save Zion, and build the Cities of Judah: who shall have the benefit of this Salvation? He answers, the Seed also of his Servants shall inherit it, and they that love his name shall dwell therein; Parents have pray'd for the Churches Deliverance, and their Children shall reap the fruit of their Prayers, so *Psal. 102. 28.* The Children of thy Servants shall continue, and their Seed shall

*shall be established before thee* : there's a double mercy here ; 1. In restoring Ordinances, 2. In vouchsafing this priviledge to the Children of Believers. Oh what would a Child of God give to know that his Posterity should see better days ? You have it in the Promise, and may have it in the performance, if you reach out the hand of Faith to receive it, for your selves and yours.

5. Children of Believing Parents shall be converted to God by Ordinances. Psal. 110. 3. *The People shall be willing in the day of thy Power* (i. e. in dispensing of powerful Ordinances) *in the beauties of holiness*, [for holiness is full of glory] *from the Womb of the Morning* [i. e. from the beginning of Christs entrance upon his Kingdom] *thou hast the Dew of thy Youth*, [i. e. those young men of the Seed of the faithful that shall be born to the Messiah, resembling Dew for quality and quantity, for number and strange manner of Generation. But a plainer text we have in Isa. 29. 22, 23. *Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his Face now wax pale* [through the loss of good blood, or death of godly] *But when he seeth his Children the work of my hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctifie my name*— Oh blessed sight ! to behold Gods Image and Workmanship in the Souls of our Children ! this is far better than to behold our Image upon them : Gods Picture is drawn by his own hand, with the Pencil of his Word and Spirit : the discovery of this will raise high Monuments to the glory of

Free-

Free-grace: *Lift up thine Eyes* (saith God, *Isa. 60. 45.*) *Thy Sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side ;* I know it means **Gentlie-converts**: And 'tis so much the more of concern to us. Another text saith *they shall bring thy Sons in their arms,* *Isa. 49. 22.* *with great care and tenderneſs as nurses carry young infants in their boſoms that they be not hurt.* Oh what a brave ſight is it to ſee converts flocking to Chriſt, and into his Church like doves to their windows or lockers ! the **Seventy** Translate it *as Doves with their young ones unto me* : You may hope for your childrens ſaving converſion, having thoſe encouraging promiſes.

6. Godly Perſons natural Children may and ſhall be uſeful inſtruments of publick good to the Church of God, *Isa 49. 17. Thy Children ſhall make haſte, ( or as others render it,) thy builders:* And her Children were her *builders*, as we read in *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* : That is a glorious day, when deſtroyers are gone, and the Churches Children build Zions Temple and Walls : But ſo it ſhall be, *Isa. 58. 12. And they that ſhall be of thee ( i. e. thy Children Spiritual or Natural, or both ) ſhall build the old Waſt places, thou ſhalt raiſe the Foundations of many generations.* Is not this worth ſomething to have bleſſed Inſtruments of Reformation raiſed out of your loyns, as Magiſtrates or Miniſters ! how did it glad *David's* heart, that his Son *Solomon* muſt build God an houſe, *2 Sam. 7. 13. He ſhall build an houſe for my*  
name



*name.* David ecchos', verse 18. *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto ? And what if a Zerobabel or a Joshuah proceed out of thy loyns, who knows but some of thy posterity may be raised up as godly Ministers to convert sinners to God ? hope and pray, for all things are possible with God, and thou hast encouragement from the Covenant.*

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## CHAP. V.

*More grounds of encouragement to Parents from the Promises.*

7 **A**Nother encouraging word to Parents for their Children is, that principles of grace and profession of godliness shall continue to future generations, *Isa: 59. 21. As for me, this is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed nor out of the mouth of thy Seeds Seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* This is a large and long-lasting charter : God's Spirits within his children, and the owning of his name in their lips, and this for ever ! What can godly Parents desire more ? Whether this Spirit import a Spirit of Prophecy or a Spirit of Sanctification, surely it's a rich kindness, that it shall run in this straight line, and channel  
as



to many generations, that the name of God, as well as your name may be kept up in your Family perpetually when you are dead and gone: Oh happy Parents that have such Children! Happy Children that had such Parents! and blessed be God that embraceth both in the bosom of the Covenant! That's a Soul-supporting word in *Hag. 2. 5.* According to the word that I covenanted with [your Fathers, yea with] you, when you came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: Fear ye not, be not daunted, there were as many and great obstructions in the way of mercy then as now, yet grace overcame them, and I have not taken away my Spirit from you notwithstanding your multiplied provocations this 2000. years, but still it is among you and shall continue to many generations: May not faith triumph in this promise?

8. That great observations shall be made of and remarks upon the Children of godly Parents, *Isa 61. 8, 9.* I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, and their seed shall be among the gentiles (i. e. Gentile Churches) and their off-spring among the People, all that see them shall acknowledg them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. Men shall speak to each other, Do not you see the faithful child of such a believing Father? Oh how many a precious day have we had, with such an ones Father, Mother, or Grandfather! this is the Pious Child of a Zealous father, you see it's not in vain to seek and

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serve

serve God, I remember the prayers and tears poured out for his Child, and I see the blessed fruit thereof: God is a prayer-hearing God: of some Children we may say, as *Paul to Timothy, 2 Tim. 1. 5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy Grand-mother Lois, and thy Mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also: His Grandmothers name was Lois, which signifies better, his Mothers name Eunice signifying victor, and Timothy is the fear of God: If Parents chuse the better part, God will give them victory over the World, Sin, and Satan, yea they shall have power with God, and obtain God-fearing Children, which others will observe and admire the grace of God in.*

9. Childrens Children to many generations are remembered with Covenant-kindness: So in the second Commandment, *Exod. 20. 6. Shewing mercy unto thousands [i. e. of generations,] of them that love me and keep*  
*Deut. 7. 9. my Commandments: This is transcendent mercy, punishment extending but to three or four of them, ver. 5. you'll say, mercy and justice are Gods two Arms, is the one longer than the other? Answer no, they are equally infinite, but he maketh his Church to feel more of his mercy, then of his justice, with the Lord there is mercy, why so? Because with him is plenteous Redemption, Psal. 130. 7. It is a Covenant of Grace, and Christ interposeth as Mediator of it: Oh! the over-*  
*flowings*

flowings of Free-grace to many generations, Psal. 103. 17, 18. *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto Childrens Children.* Mark it, it's called righteousness, to shew, it is a discharge of his obligation, by which he hath in some sort bound himself to Parents to do good to their Posterity, for it was mercy to *Abraham* to make a Co-venant, but it is truth and faithfulness to perform it to *Jacob*, and his rising seed many years after : for 'tis founded in his Eternal purpose, and continues to Eternity : and this is the reason of our hopes of the calling the *Jews*, because they are beloved for their *Fa-*thers sake, or rather because of God's Cove-  
nant with their Ancestors, *Rom.* 11. 27, 28. Oh what encouragement is this to Parents that God will not utterly cast off their seed : but will resume thoughts of love to them at last ?

10. That God will reduce the wandring Children of his People by seasonable and sanctified correction, *Psal.* 89. 29. — 35. *If his Children forsake my Law and walk not in my judgments (i. e. if they forfeit the Privileges promised by non-performance of the conditions) then will I visit their transgression with a Rod, and their iniquity with Stripes, nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him nor suffer my faithfulness to fail :* God hath adopred Affliction to be a branch of Covenant affection, 'Tis a promise [ I will visit ] not so much a threatning, for in faithfulness

Mic. 7. 20.

2 Sam. 7. 14.

15.

Psal. 119.

75.

ness he afflicts his Children: he will not take so much pains with a slave as with a Son: he will make his Children thank God for a whipping, Lord; saith a godly Parent, bring home my Child though it be by weeping cross: starve my prodigal son, or feed him with husks, that he may reflect on his Fathers plenteous Table: oh break his Leg or Arm rather than damn his Soul: cast him on a sick bed, rather than cast him into Hell: let his Purgatory be here and his Heaven hereafter: now our gracious God answers his Childrens Prayers: good *Hezekiah's* Prayers for his extravagant Son *Manasseh* were answered by Gods taking him among the Thorns, binding him with Fetters, carrying him to *Babylon*, till he had humbled him to purpose, and made him know that Jehovah was God, 2 *Chron.* 33. 11, 12, 13. doubtless the natural as well as the spiritual Father of the Prodigal will welcome home the Child, tho' broken on the Wheel.

11. The Covenant ingageth for a blessing on Parents instruction and correction of their erring Children: this is of great use, 1. For instruction, *Prov.* 22. 6. *Train up a Child in the way he should go:* [There's the Parents Duty, do thy duty to set him right in the beginning of his way, so some read it,] and when he is old he will not depart from it, i. e. not easily, ordinarily, *q. d.* if thou that art the Father wilt do thy duty faithfully, I will undertake to do my part: set thou their faces in the right road, and I will keep them in it; ordinarily

dinarily I will bless thy instructions admonitions, counsels, examples, see *Gen. 18. 19.* God saith of Abraham, *I know him that he will command his Children, and his household after him,* you'll say what is he better for that? they'll chuse whether they'll obey or no: nay saith God, but I will undertake for them, [*And they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment.*] His labour shall not be in vain; I live, saith God, to make his words take impresson on his surviving Children when he is dead? For correction you have a notable promise in *Prov. 23. 13, 14.* *With-hold not correction from the Child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not dye* [I will take care of him;] *thou shalt beat him with the Rod, and shall deliver his Soul from Hell:* O blessed whipping! surely such a scourge as fetcheth blood is easier than hell-torments: but my benediction shall be upon that correction: that's a cruel Parent, that will rather see his Child a flaming Faggot in the scorching fire, than try to whip folly out of him, that's cruel pity, better he should cry here, then roar hereafter, yea and curse thee for ever, that wouldst not speak a word or give him a tap, to prevent these intolerable torments: Oh the good that seasonable correction may do! if thou prevail not to make thy Child good, yet thou wilt have comfort in the discharge of thy duty, there's good hopes of both by the blessing of God, *Prov. 29. 17.* *Correct thy Son, and he shall give thee rest, yea he shall give delight unto thy Soul:*

yet take this caution, that these promises must not be understood absolutely, necessarily, and universally producing this effect, but ordinarily so it is. and this is sufficient motive to Parents to do their duty, and encouragement therein.

12. The last encouragement to Parents from the Covenant of God, for their surviving Children, is, that God will take care of their outward concerns in the World, *Prov. 20. 7. the just man walketh in his integrity, his Children are blessed after him, if their Father hath not heaped up riches by cunning and covetous devices, and so leaves them but little in the World, yet he hath left them in the hands of a good Father, who will take care of them, when their earthly Parents are gone: for this blessed Covenant is not confined to the persons of the Godly but entailed on their Posterity, Psal 112. 1, 2. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments, his seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed:* answerable to this, I call to mind a passage; told me by a Reverend Minister in London, who knew a poor and pious Preacher in Wiltshire, who had many Children, and little to maintain them. one askt him, how he thought they could shift when he was gone, he answered, I am not at all afraid of that, I am more afraid of them when they shall ride up and down London streets in their Coaches: which came to pass, for some of them came to be Aldermen of



of that Famous City: our frequent experience confirms this truth, what care God takes of his upright-hearted Servants Seed when they are laid in the dust: let us take holy *David's Experiment*, Psal. 37. 25. *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* If there have been some few exceptions, these yet do not destroy the truth of a general proposition: howbeit temporal promises were more express and positive to the Jews of old, than to Christians in Gospel-times; which consists more in spirituals: But this will remain a truth that Children of Godly Parents are usually provided for comfortably: even in things that concern this life, if it tends to Gods glory, and their good, and if God see it good in his Infinite Wisdom, which limitations must always be annexed to temporal promises: but if they be poor, defamed, sick, in prisons, banished, yet *all these work together for their good.* Rom. 8. 28.

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## CHAP. VI.

*An Answer to an Objection against the premises.*

**T**HE third general head in the Doctrinal part, is an answer to a main objection, which is this.

*Object.* You have produced many promises as branches of the Gospel-covenant, that the Children of godly Parents, shall have convert-



ing Grace, that God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost shall be theirs, are heirs of Gospel Priviledges, shall be sanctified, be useful instruments in the Church, shall own their profession with an holy conversation, if they wander God will reduce them, bless Parents instructions, corrections, take care of their outward concerns, &c.

Now do we not see by daily observation the clean contrary to all these, how many worthy Ministers have had worthless sons! how many worthless Children are there of gracious Parents? nay do we not see some Children of Godly Parents, miscarry more than others of their carnal civil neighbours more proud, scorers of Godliness, companions of Drunkards, Swearers, Debaucht persons that have proved a great dishonour to God, scandal to Religion, grief to Godly, and Heart-breaking to their Parents, yea have so prejudiced the Spirits of wicked men, that they say, this Religion is but a fancy, praying so much is needless, and what's become of the Covenant you so much boast of? Nay, have we not seen some Children of Godly Parents live and dye visibly graceless, under tokens of Gods Wrath, yea hastning their death by intemperance and overmuch wickedness? How is this consistent with all that you have spoken? How is God true to his Covenant?

This is a sad truth, and cannot be denied and an awful consideration, and possibly hath staggered the Faith of some, and strengthened

ed the hands of some wicked against the power of Godliness, and is too palpable an observation to be denied. But yet I hope to clear this tremendous providence from the holy Scriptures by propounding these seven considerations.

1. Some of the Children of Gods People can set their seal to Gods faithfulness, in the Covenant made to their Parents and their Seed: this clears Gods truth and the goodness of Religion: I doubt not but some Children of the Covenant can speak the language of Solomon, in 1 Kin. 8. 23, 24. *Lord God of Israel there is no God like unto thee, who keepest Covenant and Mercy with thy Servants that walk before thee with all their heart, who hast kept with thy Servant David my Father, that thou promisedst him, thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfill'd it with thine hand as it is this day:* will not some stand forth and say, I bless God for Godly Parents, my Soul hath found the benefit of their Prayers, and fruit of Gods Promise, I prefer this charter to all earthly priviledges: let others say their pleasure, I will for ever adore Free-grace, that brought me forth under so good a Covenant, it's better to me than to be born of a Royal Race, and being Heir to a Crown, *he is my God, and I will* Exod. 15.  
*prepare him an habitation, my Fathers God, and 2.*  
*I will exalt him:* and cannot some Parents say, God hath spoken well of his servants house 2 Sam. 7.  
*for a great while to come?* behold I see the <sup>19</sup>  
 buds of Grace in this or that Child, and a saving growing work in another: blessed be  
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Free-grace : I can hold forth this token for good against all the cavils of prophane Spirits, and against my own unbelieving fears.

2. God never forsakes the Children of Godly Parents, till they forsake him ; poor Children run away from God before he turn them off, 1 Chron. 28. 9. *If thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever.* If Solomon (or any other Child or Children of a Godly Father,) put on a Cloak of Religion, to please Parents or accomplish a carnal end, while they live, and cast off Religion, and perversly turn their backs on God, and embrace wicked ways, without true Repentance, they have discharged God of his performing promise, because they have voluntarily discarded the condition on their part ; now at ripe age, when they are fit to make a choice, it's a voluntary act, proceeding from their own wilfulness, *You will not come unto me* ; and then it becomes a judicial act in God to forsake them, because they first forsook him : and neither they nor their Parents can find fault with God for withdrawing from them that Grace they abused, which he is not bound to give them.

3. Parents have no reason to challenge God for non-performance of the terms of the Covenant, but themselves for their neglect of duty to their Children, this is ordinarily the reason of their Childrens miscarriage: even godly Parents are too apt to miss it, by over fondness, and negligence in their  
their

John 5. 40.

their education, not admonishing, counselling, correcting them; *David* had been too indulgent to *Adonijah*, in not crossing him, and doubtless his Conscience flew in his Face upon his Ambition: this is a plain case, good *Eli* honoured his sons above God, 1 *Sam.* 2. 29. by permitting them to dishonour him, chusing rather to offend God by connivance at their sin, than displease them by severe rebukes, effectual restraints, and severe punishments, for as a Father, and as a Magistrate he ought to have curbed them: therefore God saith, *I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth of, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* Oh what privy nips do the Consciences of Parents give them, when their Children grow up and take not good ways! alas I sinned against God, and now God leaves them to themselves; I have no cause to censure God, but condemn my self: God is Righteous, their sin is a Glass to see my own. Lord humble me, and convince them, oh pardon my iniquity, that I may pray believingly for my Seed.

4. God may pass by the immediate offspring of his faithful Children and work upon their more remote posterity: Free grace sometimes runs under ground for a season and breaks out at a distance, an immediate Son is bad, but grace layes hold on a Grandson, *Jehoshaphat* was a good man, 2 *Chron.* 20. 32. But *Jehoram* his Son proved bad, 2 *Chron.* 21. 6. Yea, *Ahaziah* his Son walked

walked in the ways of the house of *Ahab*, 2 *Chron.* 22. 3,4. *Uzziah* did right in the sight of the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 26. 4. And *Jotham* his Son, 2 *Chron.* 27. 2,6. But had a bad Son *Ahaz*, 2 *Chron.* 28. 1,2. Yet Electing love broke out again in good *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* 29. 2. But it lay dormant for a considerable time, and laid not hold of *Manasseh*. 2 *Chron.* 33. 2. Yea some think his forc'd Repentance was not sincere and saving; however the grace of God withdrew from *Amon* his Son, 2 *Chron.* 33. 20. But laid hold on good *Josiah* his Son, 2 *Chron.* 34. 2. You see how grace skips and leaps over the head of one, and lays its hand upon another, yea sometimes it crosseth hands and as *Jacob* guided his hands wittingly laying his right hand on *Ephraim* and his left hand on *Manasseh*, setting the younger before the Elder, contrary to *Josephs* desire and design: Thus God crosseth our natural affections and expectations blessing such as we least thought of and leaving others that our hearts were most set upon, to convince us of the freeness of his grace: But thus his Covenant doth stand sure.

Gen. 48. 14,  
20.

5. Delays are no denials: God hath his time to bring in the Prodigal Sons of pious Parents; [*nullum tempus occurrit Regi*] the King of Heaven can take what time he pleaseth to work on hearts. *Saul* shall long persecute the Church, yet become a chosen vessel: it's worth observing that the Children of many godly Parents sowed their wild Oats

Oats in youth ; even godly *Jacob* was guilty of many faults, stealing the blessing by a lye : Several of *Jacobs* Sons had foul spots, *Ruben* and *Judah* were guilty of Incest, *Sim-eon* and *Levi* of rash Anger, Treachery, Murder ; yet all godly Patriarchs : Several combining out of envy to sell *Joseph* : Whereby they broke their Father *Jacob's* honest heart ; but let not godly Parents make too hasty conclusions : He that believes makes not haste : It may be God defers to hear because he loves your company, and would make you an Errand to the throne of grace, your Prayers are yet too cold, he thinks fit to quicken importunity : the Answer will come double loaden, and pay for all your pains and patience ; give God the glory of his wisdom : he knows how to husband your mercies better than you : it's worth observing that those Women in Sacred Writ that waited longest for Children had the best as *Sarah*, *Rebecca*, *Rachel*, *Hannah*, *Manoah's* Wife, and *Elizabeth* : Be not preposterous, you may see Gods Salvation before you die.

6. If God never shews mercy to your seed, you must not so much murmur at his Justice, as adore his Sovereignty ; he is absolute disposer of his own grace ; such an act of Prerogative may be admired must, not be questioned : The Apostle *Paul* having waded as far as Scripture led him into the unfathomable Abyss of God's casting of the Covenanted seed of believing *Abraham*, and adopting



adopting the forlorn, and forsaken Gentiles, stands on the bank of that Ocean and cries,  
 Ro. 1. 33. [*ὡ βάθος*] *Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out: The immensity and ineffability of these counsels are such depths, as he saith in Job 32. 13. He giveth not account of any of his matters: They are oft unaccountable, but never unrighteous: Kings have [Arcana Imperij,] misteries of State, not fit to be communicated to vulgar capacities: And much more the infinit God; secret things belong to God: It's presumption to pry into Gods Ark, our weak eyes cannot behold this glorious Sun: poor sinner down on thy knees, and say thus to God; Lord, I will rather admire the riches of thy grace to my own Soul, than quarrel with thee for not giving my Child grace: It is an abstruse, and inscrutable depth, my humble Ignorance or nescience shall stop at thy pleasure, my will shall be melted into thy will; if my seed must glory in thy Justice, I will acquiesce therein and say, though clouds and darkness are round about thee, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitations of thy throne, Psal. 97. 2.*

7. Yet for all this Religion must be owned, and vindicated, God is good to the Soul that seeks him; to the Soul that waits for him: He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye  
 Isa. 45. 9. me in vain. If God never shew mercy to any  
 Lam. 3. 25. of my seed, yet I will never justifie the wicked,



wicked, by saying *It's in vain to serve God*: Mal. 3. 14.

No, God forbid, I wil never say, that prayerless Families are as good as praying Families, my own experience, and thousands more besides the infallible verity of the faithful God, will contradict that Atheistical Maxim: *in the keeping Gods commandments*

Psal. 119. 11.

*I have found great reward*; Yea I have found that the miscarriage of my Child ( which is the greatest cross that ever I met with ) hath been blessed for the good of my Soul, as the good Woman said, bearing my Children, and my crosses have cost me dear, but I could not be without either: it's not fit I should chuse my affliction, and what God lays on is welcome, and I will like Christ no worse for his Cross: for I find these bitter Waters most medicinal, and the sweetest fruit grows on this bitter Tree: the badness of my Child hath helpt to make me better: this heart-breaking hath proved an heart melting: it's true, wicked men are hardened by seeing the Children of the Covenant thus miscarry, ( even as divisions, and offences amongst Gods people, are occasions of their ruine, yea the Gospel-preaching is the *savour of Death* to some ) but as God is just therein to them, so my Soul hath cause to bless the Physitian of Souls, that so tempers this poison, as to make it wholesome Physick to my poor Soul: my crosses are better than their comforts. I will commend Religion, though I mourn over my irreligious

Mat. 10. 34.

35.

2 Cor. 2. 14.

gious Child : Godliness is gain, though I gain not Grace for my Child by it.

## CHAP. VII.

### *An Use of Conviction and Humiliation.*

**A**LL the improvement I shall make of this point, shall be 1. Of Conviction.  
2. Exhortation.

1. Of Conviction, if this be true, that notwithstanding the sins and sufferings in a godly mans family, which occasion much grief to his Spirit, yet he is comforted and satisfied in Gods gracious Gospel-covenant.

Then it follows by the rule of contraries, that those Families that have no right to this Gospel-covenant are in a woful state, have no grounds of comfort, satisfaction, no hopes of Salvation, so remaining, they are not under a blessing, but under a curse, *Prov.* 3. 33. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked : the Plague is in that house : set a cross on that door, and say Lord have mercy upon it : wicked families, read your doom, and train of curses in *Deut.* 28. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. you make great reckoning of your estates, alas there's no Covenant blessing in any thing you have, they are in themselves great blessings of God, but to you they are cursed, *Mat.* 2. 2. *If you will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send*

a curse upon you, and will curse your blessings, yea I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart: it's a dreadful flaming text against impenitent, inconsiderate sinners: not only their persons, but all their domestic concerns are under a curse; your meat, money, houses, wives, children, garments, employments, injoyments, all that you do, all that you have shall be accursed; this is an heavy case: a grounded curse by man lyes long, and lights sadly upon Successors; *Noah* pronounced a curse on *Cham's* off-spring, which never left them till it rooted out the *Canaanites*, by *Shem's* Posterity. Gen. 9. 25.

The subject is large and astonishing, I shall say something,

1. To Irreligious Parents.

2. To Irreligious Children.

1. There are some Parents within the bounds of the visible Church, that, 1. Understand not this Covenant, never set themselves to consider it: they bring their Infants to be baptized in a custom, because others do so, and it would be a shame not to have them Christened, Neighbours would cry out against them; but they neither know the meaning of Baptism, nor Covenant, nor have they any mind to know them. 2. Take no pains to get their own Souls interested in this Covenant, but are *strangers from the Covenants of Promise*, and so have no hope for themselves or seed: we find great fault with prodigal Parents that imbezel, and alienate their Ancestors Inheritance, that should have

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descended to their Children, but it's a thousand times worse for Parents, to cut off this blessed entail of the Gospel-covenant. 3. Most are negligent in doing their duty to Children, alas how few will take pains to instruct them in the principles of Religion, the nature, use, ends of the Seals of the Covenant, in praying for them, as if there were no such text in the Bible, or they had never made such a promise, *to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!* Ah! wretched Father, Mother, out of your own mouth are you condemned, that promise what you never intend to perform: how notoriously do you falsifie your promise, betray your trust.

4. There are too too many Parents that are scandalous, prophane, atheistical, and teach their young ones to lye, swear, be drunk, unclean, by the evil example they set before them. A Child brought up with *Plato*, coming home, hearing his father in a furious passion, could say, I never saw or heard the like in *Plato*. Alas, sirs you lessen your esteem with your Children by sinful courses; you bring guilt upon your family: yea you do your endeavour to root out your family: *The seed of the wicked shall be cut off*, *Psal. 37. 28.*

The whole *Psalms*, and daily experience testifies the same: Ah sinner, *thou hast consulted shame to thy house*, and some generations hence may reap the fruits of thy folly. The text saith *he will visit the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.* There are some here.

Eph. 6. 4.

Hab. 2. 10.

Exod. 20. 5.

hereditary sins, and some hereditary punishments bequeathed as an heritage to their Children; Divines vindicate Gods Justice in proving that God may righteously punish sins of Relations in their correlates, for Children (say some) are portions of Parents, as people are the riches and good of Princes: yea they have in them [*aliquid parentis*] something of the Parent, they are pieces of them. So *David* was punished in his Childs death: But I shall not spend more time in this point; because somuch is said by many others.

*Filij sunt res  
Parentum.*

How can you see your Children damned in Hell through your default? How can you hear their cries, and see their torments in that Infernal Lake, gnashing their Teeth, and roaring with Flames about their Ears, saying, oh cursed Parents, that by your Soul-damning negligence, have brought your selves and me into this lamentable state! that would not speak a word to me, nor plead the Covenant for me, to prevent these Eternal Torments: that saw me go on in sin, and would not stop my course betimes, by faithful admonition and sound correction; nay that set me a bad Example, and were content that I should perish with you, cursed be the day that ever I should know such wretched Parents, well had it been for me, that I had never been born, or had been brought forth a Beast without a rational Soul, that I might have died like a Beast, yea I had been comparatively happy if you my Parents had put me to death, or as the Heathen *Thracians*, lamenting my Birth, buried me betimes,

and rejoyced at my death, because of the miseries of humane life, but Oh I am brought forth, and fed up for the murderer, the murderer of Souls ; I had but gone ( as a condemned person ) out of a dark prison to the place of Execution, but now, having lived thus long in the World, I have fought against God, and sunk my Soul deeper in Hell : Oh wo is me, that I lived under such cruel Tyrants, and as the dying person said, I am going to Hell and my wicked Mother must follow after.

And Oh, the woful resentment of fellow damned Parents upon the hideous outcries of the fruit of their own bodies and bowels ! here neighbours fare is not good fare, but the rich mans torments are aggravated by his fine brethrens coming into the same condemnation : Every Screek of the Child will tear the heart of the self-condemning Father : how easily might I have prevented these despairing groans by a faithful discharge of duty ! What if I had followed my wandring Child with sighs and tears to God and him while there was hope, but now all too late, all too late, the guilt of my Childs blood is now required at my hands , Had I whipt him so as to fetch blood at every lash, it had not been so dreadful as the lashes of divine vengeance ; had I disinherited him for his faults, it had not been so confounding, as my own being banisht with him from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, Oh ! what is temporary



porary punishment to Eternal torments !  
Oh that God would strike the hearts of poor  
carnal Parents with bowels of pity towards  
their poor perishing off-spring.

2. Graceless irreligious Children, grown  
up, 'tis no excuse for you to be bad, be-  
cause your Parents are bad, are you so wild-  
ly sociable as to go to Hell for company ?  
This is like the miserable Indians that leap  
into their Parents graves to be buried with  
them : Or like that Italian visiting his Fa-  
thers Sepulcher, washing all the parts of the  
Monument with lamentable tears, fell down  
dead : God may say *who requires this at your*  
*hands* : But still it's worse to follow their per-  
nicious examples, as too many Children do :  
You may reverence your Ancestors, yet ex-  
amine their dictates by the word of truth,  
and not be as the young Novice entring into  
a Monastery was advised [ *tu et Asinus unum*  
*estote* ] to be like an Ass, swallow down  
all that comes. No, no, you are redeemed  
from your vain Conversation, received by tra-  
dition from your Fathers, and therefore must  
enquire not simply for the old way, but  
which is the good way : It's too much what  
Cicero ( the Heathen Orator ) thinks a com-  
mendable piece of Religion, to live and die in  
the Religion of our Ancestors : It rather be-  
comes Children to take warning by their  
Fathers falls and faults to avoid them, and  
the bad Consequences thereof : So God  
saith, *If the Father beget a Son, who seeth all*  
*his Fathers sins, considereth, turneth, he shall*

*Progenies*  
*viperarum*  
*nominat pe-*  
*tius quam*  
*viperas ut*  
*soti ordini*  
*exprobrer*  
*virulentam*  
*malitiam to-*  
*tum corpus*  
*damnare vo-*  
*luit. Calv.*  
*in Harm.*  
*Evan. in*  
*Mar. 3. 7.*  
*1 Pet. 1. 18.*  
*Jer. 6. 16.*

*Ezek. 18.*  
*14----18.*



*not die for his Fathers Iniquity*: But if you follow their sinful courses, you justify them, condemn Gods ways, and damn your own Souls: Yea you bring upon your selves the guilt of your Fathers sins besides your own; wicked Parents are set before you as Sea-marks to avoid, not as Land-marks to guide you: The Heathen Orator said, Parents are [ *Θ.οι Ἐπεσιοι* ] as household Gods, their words should be as Oracles, but alas they are but men, and may mistake and miscarry, but God in his word is an unerring guide: Follow the Lord and you cannot miss or miscarry, but you may miscarry by following the best men, you will certainly miscarry, if you follow bad men: The

John 4. 20.

Woman of *Samaria* erroneously pleads the place of her Ancestors worship: And *Jeremiah* confutes the foolish *Jews* fond plea from their Fathers practises, *Jer.* 44. 17, 21.

But I shall rather hint a few words of conviction to the irreligious Children of godly Parents: Who degenerate from their Ancestors, that it may be said as in *Isa.* 63. 16. *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not, i. e.* ( as some take it ) if our godly Ancestors *Abraham* and *Jacob* were now alive, or raised up from the dead, they would not own us for their legitimate off-spring, we are so unlike them. I fear this is too true of the Children of godly Predecessors got to rest, that tread not in their Fathers steps, but take a contrary course: their Fathers prayed in their families,

lies, but Children have left off that trade, Fathers frequent Religious Societies, Children frequent Alehouses and naughty company, Fathers walked closely with God, Children run away from God and his Institutions: Wo, Wo be to such Children.

1. They are perjured seditious, and forsworn wretches, who in their Baptism engaged to be the Lords Servants, Subjects, Souldiers, and to fight under Christ's Banner against the World, Flesh and the Devil, and took Press-money, but now have turned their backs on Christ, and fight the Devils battles against Christ. 'Wo be to such perfidious wretches, what's the doom of such as outrun their Colours but to be shot to Death? *Covenant breakers* are ranked amongst the worst of Sinners; Heathens, *Rom. 1. 31.* And such as make hard times in the later days, *2 Tim. 3. 3.* If it were but a mans Covenant it's a grand crime to dishonour it, much more this, the Covenant of Marriage is in some sense the Covenant of God, this more immediately and he will avenge the quarrel of his Covenant, *Lev. 26. 25.* Oh Sirs! how dare you look God in the face whose Covenant ye have broken? What have you to do *to take his Covenant in your mouths*, when Conscience flies in your face? *Gal. 3. 15.*  
*Prov. 2. 17.*  
*Psal. 50. 16.*

2. You have lost the benefit of your Infant-Priviledges: Your Infant membership was but calculated for your Infant-

State, now you are grown up Adult-persons, you must stand upon your own bottoms, no longer on your Parents, now you must *live* Rom. 1. 17, *by your own faith*; you must enter personally into Covenant with God, repent, obey the Gospel your selves, or else if thou be a breaker of this Gospel-Law, *thy Circumcision becomes Uncircumcision, i. e. thy Priviledges are made void, insignificant*: So God reckons uncircumcised in Heart with uncircumcised in flesh, Jer. 9. 26. And saith they are as Amo. 9. 7. *the Children of the Æthiopians unto him*, and in the Gospel it is repeated again and again, 1 Cor. 7. 19. *Circumcision is nothing and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the commandments of God*; but *faith which worketh by love*; Gal. 5. 6. *but a new Creature*: You boast of your pious Parents, as the Jews once did, and bear up big with being *Abrahams seed*, alas you may be a *generation of vipers*, as John Baptist tells them, and of your Father the Devil; as our Mar. 3. 7, 8, 9. Lord saith, except you *have the Faith and do the works of Abraham*. A famous Family will avail nothing without personal piety: Without holiness in your hearts and lives you cannot be saved: think not that God is bound, and you loose, the Covenant is mutual, reciprocal, you cannot expect the Priviledges without performing the Conditions.

3. It's an awful observation (and often proves too true) that if the Children of God's People turn Apostates they become the worst of men, and run deeper into sin, and

and further from God then many, yea any others : The Sons of good old *El* run into unparalleled wickedness, 1 Sam. 2. 13, 22. We have many sad instances of *Cain*, *Cham*, *Ishmael*, *Esau*, *Ammon*, *Absolon*, yea, *Solomon*, *Reboboam*, *Manasseh*, and few recovered and with great difficulty ; The Tribe of *Dan* ( *Jacobs* Son ) turned Idolaters, and scarce ever returned to God, therefore are not reckoned amongst the *Scaled ones*, Rom. 7. 5, 8. Because they set up *Micahs* graven Image : and it's observable, that *Jonathan* the Son of *Gershom* ( *Moses* Grandson ) was Priest to the Tribe of *Dan*, and his Sons after him, until the day of the captivity of the land, Judg. 18. 30, 31. But the Heathens observe that though this *Jonathan* was *Moses* Natural Grandson by generation, yet he is called Grandchild of *Manasseh* whom he imitated in forgetting God, not of *Moses* as appears by lising up a letter in the Hebrew to make it no *Moses* but *Manasseh* : He had so far degenerated that his Godly Grandfather must not be named with him. Thus *Israelites* are said to overpass the deeds of the wicked, i. e. of Heathens, yea, they go beyond *Sodom* and her Daughters, and change Gods judgments more than the Heathen : The reason is clear, because these sin against more Light, Love, Helps, Means, Convictions, Godly Examples, Good Education, and therefore are justly forsaken of God, and left to greater abominations : Oh tremble lest this be your case.

4. The

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נ  
מִשֶּׁה

Jer. 5. 28.

Ezek. 16.

47.  
Ezek. 5. 6.

4. The Children of Godly Parents may be cast into Eternal Torments. *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful may have an howling Son in Hell Torment. The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into *utter darkness*, *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, they that would not weep penitently here must weep despairingly hereafter : they that scorned rebukes from Parents, must have dreadful rebukes from God and Conscience, their Education was with Saints, their conclusion with Devils. There's many gone to Hell with Baptismal Water on their Face:
- Luk. 16. 24, 25. Mat. 8. 12. A& 8. 13, 20, 23. Mat. 11. 23. Luk. 12. 47.
- Baptized *Magnus*, is like to perish with his money ; he was in the *gall of bitterness*, and *bonds of iniquity*, that dragg'd him to Hell: Yea the damnation of such Caitiffs will be endorft with more vengeance than others: the Worm of Conscience will bite harder, being fed with more materials to strengthen her: the Flame will be hotter, having more fuel: the higher men are exalted towards Heaven, and reach it not, the lower do they fall to Hell, and in Hell ; if they plead their birth-right, as he that pleaded he was a Gentleman, the Judge told him, he should therefore have an higher Gallows ; or as Lord *Sturton* that was hanged for Murder in a silken Halter : so must these well-bred persons be dealt with, the more they know of their *Masters Will*, the more stripes are laid on them : the more they glory in their priviledges, the more misery in their loss, and the higher their hopes, the greater their disappointment: these

these are both hypocrites and apostates, whose sin and shame is more aggravated and augmented than others. Oh what flaming Fagots, and scorching Oil, will Parents Prayers, Tears, Councils, Admonitions, Exhortations be to dissolute young men! when they shall see Parents glorified, themselves condemned: read *Prov.* 5. 11, 12, 13.

*Mat.* 24 51.

## CHAP. VIII.

### *An Use of Exhortation or Instruction.*

**T**Here are four sorts of persons concerned in this Text and Doctrine, that may be instructed in their respective duties from it.

- Viz.* { 1. Children of Uncovenanted Parents.  
2. Children of Covenanted Parents.  
3. Persons married without Children.  
4. Persons that have a Posterity.

An hint, and but an hint to all these.

1. There are some Children attending on God in Ordinances whose immediate Parents were not in Covenant, knew not God, you may lay it to heart and lament it as your infelicity, but this is no bar to your entertainment with God: for how can you tell but some of your remote Ancestours might be godly? and if not, Grace is free, *those that come unto him, he will in no wise cast off:* *Joh.* 6. 37. you may and must venture: sinners of the Gentiles

Rom. 11. 24. Gentiles are grafted into the true Olive, even contrary to nature, that were Wild by nature, so may'st thou be. *Japhthah* was a Bastard, thrust out by his Brethren, but received by God. Be not discouraged, though thou be

Jud. 11. 1, 2, 27, 28. bad, and Parents bad, yet *God is no respecter*

Col. 3. 11. *of Persons*; Barbarian, Scythian, all's one in

Gal. 3. 28. Christ Jesus; Grace makes, but regards no difference. And if the Grace of God hath leapt over others heads to touch your hearts.

1. Adore the Sovereign actings of Free-grace, give God glory, discriminating Grace shall have the Crown set upon its head: I was doubly polluted in my Birth, from first, and immediate Parents. Oh that God should dispense with his ancient law, that a Bastard should not enter into the Congregation of the Lord, yet God hath entertained me amongst his Saints on Earth, and gives me hopes of Heaven, oh wonder of Grace! 2. Be humble all your days, and cast down in your own eyes. Young professors are apt to be proud, but it ill becomes you of all persons to be proud, whom God hath lifted from the Dunghill, to sit with Princes the Kings Children, read and apply, 2 Sam. 7. 18, 19, 20. 3. Make up your Parents defect with your own diligence, what time was lost in your child-hood and youth, now redeem it, the more ignorant your Parents were, the more knowledge do you lay in. The further they were from God, the nearer do you get to him. The more disadvantages you have had, the more pains must you take for your Souls, seeing



ing it's of absolute necessity. 4. If God have laid hold on your Hearts, be more laborious for the good of your families : you have had sad experience of the want of careful education, let not your Children have the like, but instruct them, pray for them, do what you can to bring them into Covenant with God, give not them occasion to complain of your neglect also.

2. Children of Covenanted Parents: God forbid you should act contrary to your Baptismal Covenant-relation, or contradict your obligations, that Thorns should grow instead of Lillies; or stinking Weeds, where sweet smelling Flowers have been: it's dreadful, that cursing should be heard where Prayers have been put up, or idle wanton Songs where Hosanna's have been used to the King of Heaven. 1. Review and Renew your Baptismal-covenant: you were timely devoted to God in minority, confirm it now at age; you took press-money to be the Lords Souldiers, to fight against Satan, World, Flesh. Beg the Graces and priviledges exhibited and sealed in that ordinance, *Regeneration, Adoption, Mortification, Union to Christ, Remission of Sin*: say, Lord didst thou promise before I could ask them, and now wilt thou not bestow them, when I am become an humble suitor for them? I here produce thy Charter, the deed of gift under thine own hand: thou didst in thy infancy confer a right, give me now possession of it, let me know the Seed was sown by the crop growing

Tit. 3. 5.

Rom. 6. 1. 2.

Gal. 3. 26.

Act. 22. 16.

growing up, that I may at last reap the blessed Harvest. 2. Repent for your breach of Covenant, alas I have not walkt up to my vow in Baptism : I have failed by omission, transgressed by commission, my Conscience condemns me, God may justly censure me for transgressing his Laws, changing his Ordinances, breaking the everlasting Covenants I have abused his kindness, rejected his gracious offers, neglected his Worship, and God may justly draw up a black bill of indictment against me, pass the Sentence upon me, and execute it as against an Apostate, but Lord

Isa. 24. 5.

Hos. 14. 4. *heal my back slidings, love me freely, turn away thine anger from me : and deal with me according to the tenour of this New Covenant.*

3. Plead your Fathers Covenant, Prayers, Practice : *The Lord our God be with us as he*

1 Kin. 8. 57. *was with our Fathers, let him not leave us nor forsake us.* Psal. 22. 4, 5. our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted. and thou didst deliver them, they cried unto thee, &c. blessed be God, the God of my Fathers, that gave them a believing, praying heart ; and sig-  
sig experiences of answers of Prayer : I will build on that Foundation, and surely my Lord will not be worse to me than he was to them ; How strong a plea this hath been accounted, see in *David*, 1 Chron. 12. 17. *Jehoshaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 6. thus may you plead, Lord, my Godly Father was in many straits, and still he made thee his only refuge and thou didst not leave him, Oh cut not off this blessed entail from me his Child, be

as good to me as thou wast to him. 4. Walk in the steps of your godly Ancestors, plead and practise as they did, say as *Moses*, Exod.

15. 2. *He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation ; my Fathers God, and I will exalt him : God forbid that I should sell the Inheritance of my Fathers : My Fathers Friend I will not forsake,* by sinning or apostatizing, he never gave me occasion to withdraw from him, *What iniquity have my Fathers found in God ? Shall I disoblige an old Friend, to gratify an inveterate Enemy ? No God forbid,* I will own, love, and serve *the God of my Fathers* for ever : the God of my Fathers help me to stick close to my dear Lord in duty.

1 Kin. 21.

3, 4.

Pro. 27. 10.

Jer. 2. 5.

Act. 24. 14.

3. This Doctrine concerns persons that are married, that yet have no Children to Pray and Care for, or encourage themselves about for surviving Posterity, and under this head I shall also rank unmarried persons: both these may learn these four practical lessons.

1. Be sure you lay hold of this Covenant for your own Souls : Be concerned for your selves ; if you have none else to care for, yet you have a great charge upon your hands: You are either Gods or Devils to your selves ; (*aut Deus aut Demon*) either God or Satan is with us, even when alone: Yea every man is the worst Devil to himself (*quisque sibi Satan*) every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed : Your business is therefore to secure your best interest, whether you shall have Children or no : and the only course is to lay hold on this Gospel-

Jam. 1. 14.

Gospel-Covenant, *Isa. 56. 4, 5. For thus saith the Lord unto the Eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and chuse the thing that please me, and take hold of my Covenant : Even unto them will I give in my House, and within my Walls a place and a name better than of Sons and of Daughters—*Mark it, you both secure your own Souls and your name : How much is this better than *Absoloms* Pillar, which became an Eternal shame ? You consult honour to your selves by embracing Covenant terms, practising Covenant-duties, improving Covenant-promises ; and Spiritualizing Covenant-seals, believing in Christ the Mediator of the Covenant, being sprinkled with the blood of the Covenant that you may enjoy Covenant-priviledges ; then shall your names be inrolled in the sacred Calendar, and *written among the living in Jerusalem* : God and good men will esteem and honour you, yea, your name shall be had in everlasting remembrance :

*Isa. 4. 3.* *Prov. 10. 7.* Your *memory* shall be blessed on Earth, and your Souls happy in Heaven : Oh how much is this better than Sons to bear up your name ? That's but a Temporal this a Spiritual mercy, that Common to all, this peculiar to Saints, that uncertain, this fixed, that Temporary this Eternal : Be sure of this and you are happy.

2. Be humble and mortified : You want Children, they are an Earthly blessing, *Psal.*

*Psal. 128. 3, 4.* *127. 3, 4, 5. For Children are the heritage of the Lord and the fruit of the Womb is his reward*

ward, as arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are the children of Youth, happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : These are not contemptible (though temporal) mercies, you must not throw up the head, and say tush, I care not; I have more ease and draw a light harrow, I may take my pleasure, and make even with my Estate; for I have none to leave it to when I dye : This is naughtily spoken. God would have you humbled under the want of Children, tho' but a temporal mercy : Gods Servants have lookt on it as an Affliction : You may hereby take occasion to exercise Repentance, and enquire what sin he is now punishing you for; thus you may make a virtue of necessity : Your defect of Children may prove an increase of your graces : But take heed of despising the blessing, or taking occasion of revelling away your Estates; that's an extreme one way, as penuriousness is unreasonable in you on the other hand, both are sins to be avoided, and mortified, study, Col. 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Inordinate Affection, Evil Concupiſcence, and Covetouſneſs which is Idolatry.* Away with all licentious practiſes; live Chastly, modestly, moderately, humbly, diligently in both callings.

3. Adopt some to be a Child or Children to you, if you be persons of any Estates : this is Mr. Paul Bains advice: " they must, saith he, not revel with their Substance, nor  
F " must

" must they live like idle persons and busy-  
 " bodies for want of this employment, but  
 " they must save the matter of their E-  
 " state, and depute some as Adopted Chil-  
 " dren, and be helpful in Educating others.  
 Thus he : Adoption hath been used in all  
 civilized nations, and it is *In alienam famili-*  
*am transitus*, A passing legally out of one Fa-  
 mily into another : And amongst the Romans  
 it was [ *Aut per pratorium, aut per populum :* ]  
 That which was done by the Prætors was  
 called Adoption ; That which was done by  
 the People was called Arrogation. They had  
 many formalities about it, needless here to  
 be recounted. But by this means you may  
 have children whom you may account as  
 your own : you rich men, that God hath  
 denied the fruit of your bodies to, have you  
 no near kinsmen, or poor neighbours, to  
 whom God hath granted a lovely off-spring ?  
 surely it would be acceptable both to God,  
 them, and your selves, to pick out an inge-  
 nuous child, help him to learning ; train him  
 up for God ; bequeath your Estates to make  
 an Experiment of him while you live ; So  
 may you have comfort of him, and he may  
 bear up your name : Do good with your E-  
 state, and be serviceable in Church and  
 Commonwealth. I know some rich men  
 grudg and envy any that are likely to enter  
 into their labours : but as *their glory will not*  
*descend after them*, so usually those Estates  
 do no good when they are gone ; *For who*  
*knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool,*  
*that shall have rule over his labour.*



4. Take more time and pains for the good of your own Souls, and lay out your selves for the good of others: if you be unmarried study that Text: 1 Cor. 7. 33. 35. *He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. Not that married persons have a Superseedeas, or Quietus est, from Soul-concerns. But the un-married have a more leisure and fairer opportunity for immediate acts of Devotion. Married persons have some divertisements (in themselves lawful) which un-married are free from. The Married may have numerous Children, and so have many distractions, which Childless persons are not intangled in; and so may [Vacare Deo] be more at leisure for God; or as the word is, attend on the Lord without distraction. [Ευπρόσδογον τῷ κυρίῳ ἀπεπισπόμενος,] sit close to the Lord without Disjunction; [Indivisa cum domino conjunctione vivatur] like the faithful servants who depart not from their Masters side: O happy souls who have an heart and leisure to keep so close to God! You have more time than others, see your feet and hands and heart run parallel: Your opportunities are double to others. Let your improvement be doubled. You have no children to lay up for: Lay out the more for God. He expects more from you than from others. You have no children to maintain; Honour the Lord with your substance. Buy Bibles and Catechisms for poor Children. Maintain them at School. Relieve the poor.* Prov. 3. 9.

F 2      Encourage



Incourage a Gospel Ministry. Give the tenth part at least of your yearly incomes to charitable Uses. Let your own hands be your Executors. Trust not others when you are dead; For as it is no thanks to you to bequeath Legacies when you are forced to leave all, so you know not how they will be imbezelled or disbursed. Besides, you lose the opportunity of shewing your charitable Disposition. Living Springs send forth streams liberally. Dead Pits afford nothing but what is drawn out with Buckets. Watch and catch at Objects and occasions of doing good. Spare upon your selves, but be liberal in good uses, Let your Superfluities give way to your Brothers Conveniencies: Your Conveniencies to his Necessities: Yea, your Necessities must go to supply his Extremities. Fear not wanting your selves: You put all into a good Bank. Dare you not trust God upon his Bills of Return, Promises? If you lend to the Lord, doubtless he will repay: Do you fear the Alsufficient God will turn Bankrupt? Consult the Experiences of Gods servants, and see if the Jewish Proverb have not proved true, [*Decima ut dives fias*] Pay Tythes that thou mayest be rich. Remember what our Lord saith, *Luke 6. 38. Give, and it shall be given you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosomes.*

## CHAP. IX.

*An Exhortation to Parents, to have their Children within the blessed Covenant.*

**I** Have dispatched the three first Exhortations. 4. The last concerns all Parents to do their endeavour to the uttermost to bring their Children, and leave them under this Covenant. Alas! What signifies your leaving them great Estates, Hundreds a Year, or Thousands of Gold and Silver, in comparison of this? *David* was a King, and his many Sons Noble Princes, and *Solomon* one of the most glorious Monarchs that ever the Sun saw: so that it became a Proverb, *Solomon in all his glory.* And *David* left him in peaceable possession of the Kingdom, and the Lord magnified him exceedingly: Yet all this did not cheer up dying *David's* heart so much as this blessed Covenant. That's but a carnal heart that can brag of what treasures of worldly riches he leaves his children. The gracious soul would rather bequeath a promise to them, than all the wealth of the Indies. *Zenophon* tells us, that one being asked, Where's your Treasure? He answered him [*Ὅτις Κύριός ἐστιν,*] How sweet Where *Cyrus* my friend is: Much more may a Christian say, Christ is my Friend, and my All. Oh that I could leave him in the bosom of my dear Child! That is the height

Mat. 6. 29.

2 Chro. 11.

15.

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of my Ambition, to have my Children gracious, and glorified. As an honest Minister said, If I may but see the fear of God in my Children, [*Satis habeo, satisque mihi, uxori, filiis & filiabus perspexi.*] I have enough, and my self, Wife, Sons, Daughters, are all well provided for; I need no more. Oh! that God would set Parents hearts towards the Covenant of God! I shall give some Motives and Directions. 1. For Motives, I beseech you consider:

Eph. 2. 3. 1. That your Children are *Children of wrath, as well as others*: You begot them as Men, not as Holy Men, for Grace was adventitious. Adam begot a Son in his own likeness, after his own Image, not Gods, which he had lost. For Grace comes by spiritual regeneration, not by natural generation: You gave them a sinful and miserable being! O study to give them an holy and happy being. They are born in sin; Travel Gal. 4. 19. over them till Christ be formed in them. If you cannot make them good, yet lament that they are so bad: You have done them a dis-kindness: Labour to do them this kindness, to plant Grace in them.

2. Your Children are more inclined to Vice than Vertue; they are born like the Job 11. 12. wild Asses Colt, with a byas Hell-wards, and an antipathy in their nature to what is good: Rom. 8. 7. For the carnal mind is enmity against good: *Ælian* tells of a Whore, that boasted she could easily get Scholars away from *Socrates*, but *Socrates* could get no Schollars from her.

Wrong.

Wrong is always before right; naturally, the left hand before the right. Children need not be taught what is bad, they learn that fast enough: but you'll find much ado to beat into them what is good.

3 Yet they must learn Divine Truths, and their Duty, or never be happy. *One thing is needfull*; If they die as they are born, with their backs on God, they are undone for ever; they are become like the beasts that perish. But it's better be a beast, than to be a rational man like a beast; The one goeth upwards to be judged by God, and condemned to eternal torments; but the Sensitive spirit of a beast goeth downwards to the Earth: And however some think the Beast shall not lose its individuation, yet it is not capable of Moral Evil, and so of the Punishment of Hell, as a rational, but a graceless soul is. Would you not have them far worse than Beasts? Oh! take pains to work grace in them, else no salvation, *Mat. 18. 3.*

4. They are capable of Instruction. For this end was the Book of Proverbs written, *To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.* Aristotle indeed saith, That a young man is not a fit hearer of Moral Philosophy, or of Ethicks; but he speaks of what is, [*De facto, non de eo quod fieri debet,*] what is usually, not what ought to be. Children can learn Trades, Toys, why not Scriptures, Catechisms? It's not enough to tell the capacity of many Children: were they Idiots, or Natural Fools, destitute of Common Reason,

son, it were a lamentable judgment of God, and a sore affliction to Parents. But they have members of Body, use of Reason. Oh! do what you can to add Grace. You are taken with their outward Feature, wit, Parts; these qualifie them not for Heaven, till Gods Image be super-induced.

5. Parents have great advantage in beginning with their Children, whilst young: Now they are young and tender, soonest reduced. - Like young twigs quickly bended, or a young Horse easily broken, or a young Hawk soonest brought to the lure. Take them betimes, before they be hardened in sin, and you may most likely prevail; but if they be let alone awhile, they'll be past dealing with. Custom in sin makes them like

Jer. 13. 23.

the *Aethiopian in his skin, or the Leopard spots*. Besides, teach them betimes, and they will more likely retain it. It is an usual saying, [*Li-*

*Quo semel est  
imbuta recens  
servabit odo-  
rem testadiu-*

*quidæ sunt puerorum memoria,*] Childrens memories are soft, and soonest take impression, and clear or free from disturbance, and so retain it longest. Season a New Vessel, and it will keep that favour long: Let Cloath be died in Wooll, and after in Cloath, the colour will be most lively and durable. The Application is easie.

Ezek. 18. 4.

6. Parents are betruſted with their Childrens Souls as well as Bodies: *All Souls are mine*, ſaith God, and he concredits them to the tuition of Parents as a precious Talent, or depositum, ſaying as *Pharaoh's Daughter* to *Moses Mother*, *take this child away, and*

Exod. 2. 9.

*nurſe*

*nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy Wages:* so faith God (when the Child is Born and Baptized) to Parents, I devolve the charge of this child on thee, look to it, if it miscarry through thy default, its blood will I require at thy hand: thou must give an account of its Soul: go then to God and say as *Manoah* concerning his Son *Sampson*, *how shall we order the Child? And how shall we do unto him?* Fetch your instructions from God, and assistance also for your Childrens good, consider of a reckoning day.

Ezek 3. 17.

Judges 13. 12.

7. By this you will manifest your own sincerity or sinisterity, your love to God and your Children, or your hatred; Remember, no man is really good that is not Relatively good: *When thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren*, faith our Lord, *i. e.* evidence the sincerity of thy conversion, by endeavouring the good of others: Grace is like Fire that turns what it toucheth into its own nature: if you do not your endeavour to bring others, (especially your seed) into covenant, it's a shrewd sign you are not your selves in Covenant with God: then wo be to you, Oh cursed Parents of cursed Children! Are you so indifferent whether Christs Kingdom be reared and erected in your Family, that you'll scarce put up a prayer, or speak a word to promote it? Where is your love to Christ that loved Souls so dearly? And where is your true love to your natural off-spring? if a Beast be fallen in a Pit, will you not help him out? Hast thou

Luk. 22. 32.



thou more care of a Swine than the Soul of thy Child ?

8. Satan lyes at the catch for your Children, that Fiend of Hell hunteth daily for the precious Soul of thy dear Child : he got possession when thy Child came into the World, and he makes it his business to keep possession, and will do till Christ that's *stronger* than he cast him out : and wilt thou see a Dog, a Bear, the Lion of Hell hurry away thy Child, Man, and not cry out to Heaven for aid ? O heard-hearted miscreant ! doth not nature teach the Hen to fly at the glade that would take her Chickens ; yea the Sheep to turn upon the Dog that would catch her Lamb ? And art thou so far degenerated as to cast of all pity to thine own bowels ? Oh Monster of Mankind ! hast thou laid aside Humanity, as well as Christianity ?

9. The Church and Commonwealth require this office of love from you to your Children : and if you neglect their Education you take a course to corrupt both. It's worth observing, that the Heathen Romans sued in their Courts of Judicature, such persons as were not careful in Educating their Children ; *Cicero* laid this to the charge of *Verres*, that he had debauched his Son, by Intemperance, Riot, Wantonness ; it seems it was actionable among Heathens, and it were well if it were punished among pretended Christians ; Wo be to that Town where the Springs are poisoned : sad is the case of that Church and State where Academies and Inns of Court



Court are corrupted, yea, *corrupters* ; where *strange Children are begot* and brought up ; no reformation can be expected till publick Schools be reformed. It's said of *Protagoras* he lived 60 years, and spent 40 years in corrupting youth ; if not only Old Trees in an Orchard be rotten but young also, what fruit can be expected ? Its fit they be digged up, by this we may Divine what will become of a Church or Kingdom.

10. The consequence is sad of Parents neglect of their Childrens due education : *a Child left to himself bringeth his Mother to shame*, Pro. 29. 15. throw the Reines on the Childs Neck, and *whither will he not run ? A foolish Son is the heaviness of his Mother*, the calamity of his Father : neither Father nor Mother have joy in a wicked Child, and usually they may thank themselves for it ; the Switzers had a law, that if a Child was condemned to dye, the Parent should execute him, because it's neglect in Parents that is usually the rack of their Children : it's true a godly Man may have a bad Son, but this is most ordinary. Oh what shame will cover the Face, and horror fill the Conscience of a bad Father, or a good Father conscious of guilt, when he shall see his Child running hell-wards, or roaring in those unquenchable Torments ! I advise you therefore to a timely care to prevent these dreadful consequences.

*Quest.* What course should Parents take to restrain sin in Children, principle them with

Isa. 1. 4.  
Hos. 5. 7.

Prov. 10. 1.  
Pro. 19. 15.  
Pro. 17. 21.

with Grace, and bring them within the Covenant of God ?

I answer this is a large and ordinary subject, that I cannot now insist on : practical Divines lay four great duties before Parents, for the Education of their Children,

- |                |     |                          |
|----------------|-----|--------------------------|
| 1. Provision.  | } { | 3. Instruction.          |
| 2. Correction. |     | 4. Prayer, Supplication. |

1. Providing Food, Rayment, a Calling : This though a great duty, I pass, as not pertinent to our case : only I find this remarkable passage, that the Athenians ordered in their laws, that if Parents had not brought up their Children in a lawful calling, they should not be bound to keep their Parents : thus all were set to Trades.

2. For correction, I shall not enlarge on that, only observe it to be done seasonably, Prov. 19. 18, *Chasten thy Son while there is hope*, some put it off till he become too stubborn, do it with self-reflection, humiliation, moderation, prayer, instructing them in their fault, and the way to mend it. I pass this also.

3. Instruction, this I chiefly aimed at, if I had leasure, an hint of 1. The Matter.  
2. The Manner of performing this duty.

1. For Matter, instruct your Children in the main fundamental principles of our Christian Religion, as, that there is a God ; concerning his nature, properties, persons of the God-head : the creation of the World ; of  
Man,

Man, the Immortality of the Soul ; the Nature of Sin ; the fall of *Adam* ; the sad fruits thereof : the Remedy by Christ, his Humiliation Offices, Exaltation ; the Duty of Man ; the nature of a Church ; priviledges, properties of Believers ; the Ordinances, the state of all men after death ; Rewards and Punishments, &c.

You are likewise to instruct them in the Covenant of Grace ; the nature, use, ends of it ; the difference betwixt this and the old Covenant of Works ; the Mediator of it ; the terms, properties, and conditions thereof ; the seals of it. Baptism and the Lords Supper ; the priviledge and necessity of Souls being within it : press them with Arguments to enter into it, give directions about it.

2. For the Manner of your instructing your Children, you must do it. 1. Timorously as soon as they are capable, but *drawn from* Isa. 28. 9. *the breasts, [ab incunabulis]* that they may 2 Tim. 3. 15. suck in knowledge with there mothers milk as *Timothy*. 2. Frequently, once is not enough but you must inculcate truths on them, whet them, as you go oft with the Knife upon the Whet-stone, so the word Deut. 6. 7. signifies. 3. Experimentally not by rote, hear-say, work things on your hearts, learn Eph. 4. 21. and speak the truth *as it is in Jesus* : speak feelingly, from the Heart, as one that believes thy self. 4. Wisely, observe the tempers of your Children, some must be Jud. 22. 23. drawn, others driven, Col. 3. 21. provoke not tender-hearted to fretting, discontent. 5. Seasonably,

ably, observe [*candida tempora*] proper melting seasons, as a good humour, affliction, conviction, speak to them words upon the Wheel, or in some nick of time, when they will be best taken. 6. Lovingly, winningly, meekly, not in passion, but draw with cords of love: oil them with kindness, and they will go down glibly: even bitter Pills rolled in Sugar will be well taken. 7. Plainly, familiarly, not in high flown language, but use similitudes, speak as they are able to bear it, come on gradually, [*guttatim*] by drops, here a little there a little, into these narrow mouth'd vessels. 8. Faithfully, search the wound, do not skin it over: a fair hand makes a foul wound: a weak dose rather stirs, than purgeth out bad humours, rebuke sharply. 9. Scripturally, bring your authority along with you, shew them chapter and verse, Gods authority joined with yours may prevail much, these are Spiritual Weapons. 10. Prayingly, pray solemnly before an instruction, by Ejaculation, in speaking: it's not your work but Gods to make it successful: Be sensible that all is lost if God give it not the setting on, and strike with the great hammer.

## CHAP. X.

*Directions to Parents, and encouragements in their pleading for their Children.*

4. **T**HE last Exhortation to Parents on the behalf of their surviving Children is prayer and supplication, this is a natural duty, and catholick relief to the aking hearts of Godly Parents, not only to obtain Children, as *Hanna*, but for Grace in Children, when they go astray : hence it was that holy *Abraham*, to whom this Covenant was first made, breaths out his longing Soul in a short Ejaculation for his wild Son, *Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!* Gen. 17. 18. *q. d.* I thank God for *Isaac*, but I am not satisfied with *Isaac* only, I must beg Spiritual and Eternal Life for my extravagant Son *Ishmael*, though he be not the Son of the Promise: yet let him be a Son of Promise; if *Isaac* must have the Earthly *Canaan*; let not *Ishmael* be excluded out of the heavenly. Thus must you plead with the Lord for Children.

To assist you herein, I shall subjoyn some pleas, Arguments and Encouragements not to move God, but to quicken your Faith, Hope, and Importunity. Thus then say.

1. Lord, this Covenant thou hast made with Believers and their Seed, did spring only from the Fountain of thy Free-grace : this Promise commenced before I had a Being.

Deut. 7. 7, 8. ing, and therefore could not depend on any worthiness in me: the Lord did not set his love on Israel because they were better than others, but because he loved them, the love of benevolence produced the love of complacency, Jer. 31. 3. it's an *Everlasting love* both in its original and duration: it hath no cause but in Gods breast, and shall have no end: Lord, for thy words sake, yea, *for thy Servants sake*, [viz. 2 Sam. 7. 21. compared with 1 Chr. 17. 19. Christ, who is Gods Essential word] and according to thy own heart, hast thou done all these great things: hadst thou seen any stop or obstruction on my part, thou wouldest have forbore making this Covenant. But such a Covenant there is, and Grace made it, look into thine own heart, Lord, and as Grace only made it, so let Grace perform it.

2. Lord, Thou art true and faithful in the performance of thy promises: *Mercy* Mic. 7. 20. made this Covenant with *Abraham*, *Truth* Numb. 23. performs it to *Jacob*: thou art not as man 19. that thou shouldst lye; thou hast sworn by Psal. 89. 35. *thy holiness* that thou wilt not lye unto *David*: well Lord, in hopes of the performance of thy Covenant, I married, begot Children, gave them up to God in Baptism, wherein thou tookest them as thine own; and dost thou now repent of thy choice? Oh no, thou Ifa. 54. 9, 10. hast told me in thy word, that thy Covenant-promises are as sure as the Waters of *Noah* not overflowing the World: yea the Mountains and Hills will sooner depart, than God Jer. 31. 35, 36, 37. go back from his word: yea his Covenant is

is as sure as the Ordinances of Heaven, Sun Moon and Stars: as sure as day and night: Lord, my Soul having got such good hold of thee by Faith, I will not let go this hold, but stick fast till thou make good thy promise to me and my seed: I am resolved to sue thy Bond, by Faith and Prayer, till thou pay this debt.

3. Lord, thou hast made this Covenant good to others: thou hast performed the mercy promised to our Fathers, and remembered thy holy Covenant: there hath been a Luk. 1. 45, 55, 72. performance of the things spoken by the Lord: never could any stand forth, and challenge thee for the breach of promise, from the beginning of the World to this day: and I humbly hope thou wilt not begin with me: thou madest a promise to *Abraham* of Gen. 13. 16, 17, 18. a numerous off-spring and inhabiting *Canaan*, and thou didst perform all to a tittle, yea to a minute, the least Iota did not fail, or fall to the ground: and thou art as great, as good, as powerful, as merciful now as ever; thou sayest, *is any thing too hard for the Lord?* Gen. 18. 14. Job 42. 2. My Soul Eccho's, No: I know, that thou canst do every thing: with God all things are possible, *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief;* thou art able to reduce my Prodigal Child, to convert my stubborn Child: Oh give a proof of thy power in this great work.

4. Lord, thou hast made good the Promise to my own Soul: my Parents improved and pleaded thy Covenant for me, a sinful wretch, and wilt thou not make the same  
G good



1 Kin. 8.  
23, 24.

good to mine ? I must say as once Solomon, *Thou hast kept with thy Servant David my Father, that thou promisedst him, thou spakest also with thy Mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day :* Blessed be the God of my Fathers, that hath not cut off his kindness from me, that am the Seed of those faithful ones, that are now at rest with thee : I my self, can rise up and bear witness to thy faithfulness [*Ecce signum*] Behold a testimo-

Psal. 86. 16,  
17.

Psal. 116.  
16.

ny of Divine love : thou hast *shewed me a token for good, who am the Son of thy handmaid :* and I take this as a pledge of more kindness to mine : thou hast loosed my Bonds, wilt thou not also knock off the Fetters of sin from my poor Child ? I was as wicked as any; and cost my Father, and Mother many a tear and groan, but thou heardest their Prayer, wilt thou not also hear me ?

Jer. 31. 34.

Deut. 30. 6.

Hof. 14. 7.

Mal. 4. 6.

5. Lord; I do find all that I want for my self and seed within the compass of the Covenant : for as thou hast promised to be my God, and pardon sin, so thou hast undertaken to work the conditions thou requirest, as absolutely necessary for obtaining the privileges of the Covenant : thou say'st *they shall all know me from the least to the greatest of them, i. e. as I understand it, young as well as old :* thou sayst, *the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God.* Again thou say'st, *They that dwell under his shadow shall return :* amongst whom are Children : and that *he will turn the hearts of the Fathers with the Children,*

*dren* ( so some read it : ) this is enough Lord, may my Children be savingly converted, I have all my desire, for this shall be their Salvation ; and I have these promises under thy hand, and surely they are not insignificant.

6. Yea, Lord, thou hast converted some whose immediate Parents were not in Covenant, and whether their remote Parents, were so, who can tell ? I plainly discern thou sometimes leapest out of the ordinary road, reaching over the heads of some nearer related, to lay hold on strangers hearts, and I do not grudge them this mercy, but adore the freeness of Divine Grace : only, my Soul fetcheth some encouragement thence, will my Lord *graft into the true Olive* Rom. 11: 17, 23. some *wild branches*, and not take in natural ? Hos. 2. 23. Wilt thou say, *Ammi my people* to them that were not thy people, and wilt thou say *Lo ammi* to such as cling to thee, are resolved not to forgo thee ? Oh my Lord, the exuberancy of Free-grace to strangers is an incouragement to me ; and thus I say, will my Father give such lumps of bread to Dogs, and can he not afford a crum to a Child ? I see some, whose Parents never spake a word to God for them, eminent in Grace, and Monuments of free-grace, and shall any of my Children, which thou hast taken into thy Family be shut out of thy doors ? I hope not.

7. Lord, if thou hadst a design to deny my suit thou wouldst have shut my mouth in prayer : for thy word saith, *Thou wilt pre-* Psal. 10. 17  
pare

pare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear : An enlarged heart in Prayer, is not only a mean, but a pledge of gracious audience : surely thou wilt not send thy Spirit into my heart, and draw out my heart to thee in vain : when a Father bids his Child ask, he designs to give : thou wilt not let this blessed spirit breathe in vain in my soul. Wilt thou enlarge my heart, and not grant my request ? *Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* In thee, O Lord, do I hope, thou wilt hear me, O Lord, my God. Thou hast raised my heart in Expectation, wilt thou not give me the mercy I expect ?

Psal. 38. 9.  
15.

8. Lord, is not thy Glory concerned in this affair as well as my comfort ? And yet my comfort is something in thine eye ; For thou sayst, *The voyce of rejoycing and salvation is in the Tabernacles of the righteous :* And alas ! What joy can there be in a family, when a foolish Son is heaviness both to Father and Mother, and a disturbance to the whole house ? But oh ! thy Name is dishonoured by my own flesh ; wicked men hardened ; some scandalized by the miscarrying of the Children of the Covenant. But on the other hand, if Covenant-grace be spread upon my child's heart, by Converting-grace, many will glorifie God : His own Soul will be the actual lively Trumpet of Divine Glory, by confessing sin, and turning to God ; thy Omniscience, Grace and Omnipotency, will be made glorious ; And who can tell how

Pf. 118. 15.

Prov. 10. 1.

Gal. 1. 24.

how many may be won to God by his Example, and every Convert *Glorifies God in the day of their visitation*, and at the great Day God will be glorified in his Saints. Lord, consult thy Glory !

1 Pet. 2.12.  
2 Thes. 1.10.

9. Lord, thou hast given me some encouragement concerning this Child I am praying for : When my Child was young he was very hopeful ; now he is grown up, my hopes are dashed : He hath now embraced the world, or is fallen into bad company and courses : the less are my hopes now, because he is a woful Apostate, and sins against more light than others, and this daunts and damps my spirit : however I will pray and wait still, for what is a daunting to me, is rather an advantage to thee. *In the mount of the Lord it is seen.* When the knife is at Isaac's throat, the valley of Achor is a door of hope. When men say, *our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts, then the graves are opened, and there's life from the dead.* The case is mine. I am saying as *Jonah*, *I am cast out of his sight* : yet will I look again toward thy holy Temple. The other look may fetch the mercy. There's a may be in the case : Can a Child of so many Prayers and Fears miscarry ?

Gen. 22.14.

Hos. 2.14.

Ezek. 37.  
11, 12.

This brings to mind a passage in *Melchior Adamus, De vitis Theol. Germ. pag. 724.* It is this ; The mother of *Hunnius*, being with child of him, had a Vision ; She thought she was in the Church, and took up a Reed, or a Straw, or such a small thing ; While she

held it in her Fingers, it so increased, that she was almost oppressed with its weight, even to death. She presently saw it turned into a Pillar of the Temple; Then she was eased of her burden. This was verified in her Son *Hunnius*, who though religiously educated, and hopeful in Childhood, yet fell into bad Company, and then into horrible Temptations, and sad Apprehensions, That he had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, but by Grace was recovered, and proves an excellent instrument in the Church of God. This may be of use to poor afflicted desponding Parents.

10. Lord, If thou deny my suit, and glorifie thy Justice, in the rejection and damnation of My child; I must and will acquiesce in thy Sovereign righteous Will. It's hard to bring my heart to it, but I will say, Thy Will be done. *Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledg of God! How unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out?* I my self deserve to be forsaken and cast into Hell. I have many a time told thee, I must for ever justifie God with flames about mine ears, if thy justice be glorified in my destruction for all my abominations: And if thou deal thus with my beloved Off spring, I will say, *The Lord is righteous in all his wayes, and holy in all his works. Righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto me and mine confusion of faces.* I submit my all to thee, and thank thee for grace in my own soul, and hopes of Glory; and if my

Rom. 11. 33

Psa. 145. 17.

Dan. 9. 7.

my wilful child may not bring a revenue of Glory to free Grace, I will be content with thy raising up a revenue of Glory to thy Justice in his just condemnation.

*Obj.* But what tender-hearted Parent can be contented to see his Child damned !

*Answ.* You must distinguish betwixt Nature and Grace. Nature loves its own, and cannot bear to see part of it self in misery. Yea, grace cannot but desire, cannot but earnestly breathe after the spiritual and eternal good of our Children. And 'tis not only lawfull, but duty to desire it. Yet if God deny it, Grace brings man's Will to a due submission to the Divine disposal ; for the more a Christian is like to God, the more is his Will melted into God's Will ; and therefore will a Child of God rejoyce in the execution of Gods justice upon dearest carnal Relations at the great Day. As sanctified *Levi* in the cause of God, said to his Father and his Mother, *I have not seen* : Deut. 33.9 neither did he acknowledg his Brethren, nor knew his own Children. Nature will be in a sort swallowed by grace in Gods good pleasure. That was a remarkable passage of a gracious Gentlewoman that had a vicious Son, who fell into many debaucheries, and into one hainous Act, which sunk her tender spirit : But recovering her self, she said to him with some warmth, Ah ! my sinful Son, thou hast cost me many a Tear, Groan, and bitter hour ; but a day is coming, when I shall triumph in seeing the just vengeance



of God executed upon thee : this did so appall the young Gentleman that he laid it to heart, repented, and became a new man, to the joy of his Godly Mother : But,

2. You must distinguish about Damnation, and look on it as under a double notion, 1. as a state of compleat Sinning, Blaspheming and hating God to the utmost. God calls you not to be content with this, which is so directly contrary to the Grace of God in the Christian : nor yet may you be content to have your Child separated from God, the cheifest good ; which is the worst part of hell. But, 2. Hell may be considered as a place or state of torment, and misery, to the Rational Creature : and upon this account, you must not be contented simply to have your Child tormented, which is abhorrent to nature, but your Souls must be so overruled with the Divine pleasure, as where his will is manifested, you must rest satisfied in that by which God thinks fit to Glorify himself.

11. Yet further, say, Lord, if thou refuse to hear me for this or that particular Child, yet I will thank thee for Free Grace expressed to another Child, or more of my Children that are hopefull : God forbid that my sorrow for our Child should drown all my Comfort in another, or my complaints should silence my gratitude : I will praise thee for what I enjoy, and hope for more : Nature teacheth persons to beg a future, by acknowledging a former kindness. I Bless the Lord, I have a Praying, Obeying Child, that

was



was born as destitute of Grace as this : and I humbly take this as a pledg of more ; Thou hast Grace enough for all my Children, I will not despond, but be thankfull ; such a Child I hope, hath embraced the Covenant of God : *Who am I, O Lord God ! and what is my house ? That thou hast brought me hitherto.* 2 Sam. 7. 18, 19, 20. And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God ? but thou hast spoken also of thy Servants house for a great while to come : and is this the manner of man, O Lord God ? Thou didst not owe me any thing, and yet thou hast given me the best things : 'Tis true I have a Cain, yet I have a Righteous Abel, I have a Shem as well as a Cham, an Isaac as well as an Ishmael, a Jacob, as well as an Esau, a Solomon as well as an Ammon, or Absalon : All my Children were born in Sin, and God might have suffered all to have dyed in Sin : But blessed be Free-Grace, that hath pluckt this or that as a brand out of the Fire ; God hath heard prayers and taken of my Seed, to be the Lords, he hath not dealt so with all Families. I own this as an higher preferment for my Children then if they were the greatest princes on Earth, I will be thankful for them, yet jealous of them, and mix my praises with prayers, the heart is very deceitfull ; I will give God Glory, yet not glory in my Children : But my jealousy shall not obscure thy Glory of this mercy. *Ebenezer* hitherto God hath helpt. I will rejoyce with trembling : something God hath done that I may love and praise him, and be encouraged  
to

to hope for more: Much is yet to do that I may still have an Errand to the Throne of Grace, thus my Lord keeps me in a waiting depending posture I must have something to evidence that God is my God, and an hearer of Prayer: I must not have all, that I may know I am on Earth, and not in Heaven: It may be Religion may live in my Family when I am dead and gone: And if all my Seed be not happy, I hope some may: However God hath done my own Soul good, and laid a foundation of Grace in my heart, and will lay the top Stone in Glory: It was a notable speech of that gracious Minister of Christ, One Mr. Avery, passing to *New-England*, in a Storm at Sea, expecting every wave to bring death, he lift up his Eyes to Heaven, and Said, Lord I cannot challeng of preservation of my life, but according to thy Covenant I challeng Heaven: Immediately a wave wafted him to Heaven: he his Wife, and five Children, being then drowned: and is this not hing that thou may'st with gratitude and confidence claim a Promise for thy own Salvation: If it reach no farther.

12. Lastly, Lord notwithstanding all the discouragement I have I will Believe, Hope, and Pray till thou take me off by my own death, or the death of my Child: As I will follow on to know, and love, and serve the Lord, whatever thou do with me, so I am resolved to Pray and Hope, and wait whatever thou say to me, for I am sure, 'tis good for a man both to hope and quietly wait for the

See the life  
of Mr. Ma-  
ther, p. 131.

Lam. 3. 26.

the Salvation of the Lord : God is worthy waiting on, even upon my Knees, I cannot be in a better exercise : Say then, Oh my dear Lord, I am a Sinfull worm, have a wicked heart, am of polluted lips, a sinfull life, I deserve not the least crum of Bread or drop of Water, I have forfeited my right to all Covenants, as well as common Mercys, for my self and Seed : I have begot a Child in my own Image, not thine : it is a Child of wrath by nature, as well as others, but thou in thy love hast made a Covenant with believers and their Seed : thou hast brought me into the bond of the Covenant : the like mercy I beg for mine : my Child must have thine Image as well as mine, or it is undone for ever : and it is not in my power to convey it, but thou canst : My dayly errand to the throne of Grace, is to beg the blessings of the Covenant of Grace to me and mine : I will not go from thy door without an alms : thou shalt have a troublesom guest of me till thou grant my request : *O remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope :* Come, Lord, let Covenant-Grace enter into the soul of my Child, which is part of my self : and I will take it as done to my self ; if I had not the mercy I beg under a promise, I durst not ask it, but thou hast made thy self a debtor, and I will put thy bond in suit by Faith in Prayer : Thou canst not deny thine own hand writing : Thou art Faithfull, and wilt perform it to some, and why not to me.

Psal. 119.  
49.

God loves such importunate beggers, and  
our

Luke. 11. 5,  
8, 9. 18 . 1. 8.

our dear Lord Jesus hath propounded two parables to provoke importunity: therefore it is not unmannerly sauciness, but holy earnestness, and approved impudence, wherein God much delights: the End thereof is not to move God to alter his purpose, but that our own Souls may have the condition of thy Promise: thus the *Canaanitish* (or the *Syrophenician*) Woman crys out for her Daughter, *Have mercy on me O Lord, thou Son of David, my Daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil.* Mat. 15. 22, 28. She received a first, a second, a third repulse, but She hangs on still, and will have no nay. and at last obtained her suit with an high Encomium and larg grant: *O Woman great is thy Faith be it unto thee even as thou wilt: go thou and do likewise.*

Mark, 7. 24,  
25.

*Obj.* Alas! Sir but I am faithless, had I Faith as that Woman had, I might prevail, and you say Faith in Gods Covenant is necessary for the parent, but I cannot Pray in Faith for my Child, and how then should I prevail?

*Ans.* There is a two-fold faith, General, and Objective, by which you believe God is able and willing, to make good his Covenant, doth make it good to some, and would to thee if thou hadst the condition: this is absolutely necessary in all that come to God, and this thou hast thou art sure that Christ *is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him,* Heb. 7. 25. *εἰς τὸ παντελές*, to the uttermost, i.e. to the utmost extent of the Covenant-grant, yea, saist thou, I believe his ability, but I question my right coming, therefore. 2.

Web. 12. 6.  
Jam. 1. 6, 7.

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There is a particular perswasion, that God will grant this request, *Ergo*, for this child, or in this case: 'tis true sometimes the Lord doth impress this upon the Spirit with power that this Mercy shall be granted, this Child shall be Converted, but this is not necessary for the obtaining of the Mercy: a godly Soul may want faith to believe the issue of his Prayer, and yet be heard, as you see in *David*, *Psal. 31. 22. I said in my hast, I am cut off from before thine eyes.* Mark it, he had no particular faith for his preservation, yet he prayed still nevertheless. Saith he, *Thou heardest the voyce of my supplication, when I cryed unto thee.* Observe it, the want of his Faith hindred not the fruit of his Prayer, nor will it do of thine.

2. What ailes thee to follow so hard after God? Is it not a principle of Faith? Hast thou not laid hold on Gods Covenant for thine own Soul? What means that frequent renewing of thy Covenant with the Lord, in taking God to be thy God, chiefest Good, and utmost End? and thy dedicating thy all to the Lord? This shews thou art in Covenant: for this is the Essence of saving Faith; and thy being so much concerned for thy Seed, declares plainly thy being in Covenant. Thou goest daily to the Lord, in earnest pleadings for thy Children, and wilt not be beat off, (like the foresaid woman) though one while he answers not, another while he gives discouraging answers: And is not this sincere faith? Our Lord accounted it so in  
the

the woman that weathered out so many affronts in her importunate pleas : And are not thy motions still more vigorous ? Poor soul, thou art following the Lord with tears, sighs, and groans, for thy wandring Child, saying still, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief !*

Mar. 9. 24. I will still express my desires of Grace for my child, or children ; nothing else shall serve my turn : Civility will not please me, nor profit them without Sanctity. I am not satisfied with Gifts without Grace ; Common Grace, without Saving Grace. Carnal men are well content to see their Children Witty, Ingenious, Industrious, and likely to thrive in the World, good Husbands, notable Tradesmen, and likely to come to preferment. But oh my Lord, thou knowest my breathings ; I look further : My soul longs for a principle of Grace, and a Portion in another World : This is all my desire, and all my Salvation.

Yea, you'll say, But I am afraid I offend God, by being too importunate ; Who can tell whether my Child be Elected, and if not, it's in vain to pray, I cannot alter Gods Decree ?

Deut. 29. 29. I Answer : *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things that are revealed, belong unto us, and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Law.* You must not make Gods hidden Councils, but his holy Scriptures the Rule of your Prayers. God saith, *he will have all men saved* : Thus his Will is manifested, and I told you the

1 Tim. 2. 4. War-



Warrant you have to believe, and pray for the Children of the Covenant; and you cannot be too importunate, so as you do not limit the Holy One of *Israel*: and as long as there is life, there is hope; Therefore continue your Prayers the term of your natural life, unless God take you off by some remarkable Providence. I knew a very gracious zealous woman, many years ago, who was weeping and wrestling with God, in an Out-house in the night, for the precious Soul of her Prodigal Son, who was now fallen sick, and upon his Death bed; and while she was groaning out her soul with tears, and strong cries, she thought she heard a voice, saying to her, [*Be content, what I have done I have done:*] She rose off her knees, could not speak a word more, went away quieted; and upon enquiry, found that her Son breathed out his last breath at that very instant in a Town two miles thence.

I am not credulous of such Stories: but have great reason to believe the truth of it, yet the instance is singular; However this is a truth, that God shuts up the Spirit of Prayer, when he doth not intend to hear a good Woman, so God had never denyed what she had asked of God in Prayer: One objected a child of hers dying, she replied it's true, but I could never Pray for that Child; Gods assistings or withdrawings often portend the event.

But 'tis safest for us to suspect some fault in our Persons or Prayers if God do not hear us for our Children, therefore it becomes us to  
search



search our Consciences and Conversations, to  
find out the Sin, confess it, beg a pardon in  
the Blood of Christ, and Mortify it, and  
then Pray, say as Divine *Herbert's Church  
Lock and Key.*

I know it is my Sin, which locks thine ears,  
and binds thy hands  
Out-crying my requests, drowning my tears,  
Or else the chilness of my faint demands :

But as cold hands are angry with the Fire,  
and mend it still.  
So I do lay the want of my desire,  
Not on my Sins or coldness but thy will :

Yet hear, Oh God! only for his bloods sake,  
which pleads for me.  
For though sins plead too, yet like stones they  
( make,  
His bloods sweet current much more loud to  
( be.

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*The End.*

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